

CHANDAMAMA

JULY 1996

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CHANDAMAMA

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NEXT ISSUE

Vol.27 AUGUST 1996 No. 2

THE BLACK IDOL: King Gobindvarma, of Gopalpur, is a devotee of Vishnu. He wishes to build a magnificent temple for the Lord. He entrusts the work to Nagayya, the best architect in the kingdom. He puts up a hut near the site and starts work on the temple. He also collects different kinds of stones for the pillars, walls, and roofs. He searches everywhere for a proper stone for the idol, but he fails to locate one. Later, he comes upon a black slab. He takes it to the site: That night he has a dream. A beautiful girl appears and tells him that a curse had converted her as the slab and he should sculpt her figure so that she can get back to her heavenly abode. Nagayya is in a dilemma.

REAL OR FAKE?: Sunder and Chander belong to the same village. The first one completes any work given to him fast and efficiently; the second one is lazy. A sanyasi arrives in their village. He has some mysterious powers, and naturally people flock to him. Both Sunder and Chander feel he is a fake and wish to expose him, so that people will not be cheated. Does either of them succeed?

PLUS another instalment of **Golden Hour**, the comics **Immortal Friendship**, and the fast-moving **Coastal Journeys**.

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Founder: CHAKRAPANI

Controlling Editor : NAGI REDDI

Need for Quality Education

Another academic session has started, with the reopening of schools and colleges. The number of children seeking admission to these institutions is steadily increasing, but are they adequately equipped to impart the kind of education the students need?

According to the Indian Academy of Sciences in Bangalore, the number of school-going children in India ten years ago was 1,200,000, and this number had been steadily increasing at the average rate of three per cent. Compared to this, the following facts will appear horrifying. Nearly 60 per cent of the schools do not have even a single blackboard! Some 30 per cent of the schools cannot boast of libraries or laboratories.

If this is the state of affairs, how can schools ensure any quality education? Small wonder, then, that these schools are nothing more than teaching shops. Those who are responsible for starting such schools and who are not serious enough to maintain them as "educational" institutions will take the blame of running "factories", which only produce an income for them, unmindful of the future life of the children they admit in their so-called schools.

This degeneration can also be seen in institutions which are supposed to give the students 'higher' education. The Academy, quoting its survey, tells us that if 40 years ago, 30 to 32 per cent of the students were opting for science studies, this figure has been reduced to 19 or 20 per cent these days – all because the colleges and professional institutions do not have facilities for pursuing science studies.

High time things are improved to meet the challenges of the rapid changes that are overtaking our country.

A WINDOW ON THE WORLD

India's new Prime Minister

April and May saw our country going to polls to elect 543 members to the Lok Sabha and 914 members to the Assemblies of six States. The exercise involving an electorate of over 500,000,000 went off smoothly, barring minor incidents, necessitating re-poll in certain constituencies and polling booths. The erstwhile ruling parties were defeated in five States. Only West Bengal voted the Left Front back to power.

There was change of government at the Centre, too. The ruling Congress Party could muster only 140 seats, while the Bharatiya Janata Party had 21 more seats and was thus the party with the largest number of members, though it did not have an absolute majority to form a government on its own. A coalition of parties was the only solution, and the question was: which party or parties would support which other party?

The Janata Dal had 46 seats to its credit, while the two major partners of the Left Front - the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party (Marxist) - had collected 44 seats. Nearly 17 regional parties and successful Independent candidates together had won in 152 seats.

Talks and discussions between the parties resulted in the Bharatiya Janata Party receiving the support of 33 members belonging to some regional parties. The President of India invited the BJP

leader, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, to form a government, which he did on May 15. The other parties, who were also holding parleys and had been assured of support by the Congress Party, felt that they should have been given the chance first.

As directed by the President, the BJP Government sought a vote of confidence in the hurriedly convened parliament, but when it became apparent that the motion would be lost, the BJP Government tendered its resignation, after being in office for just 13 days.

It was now the turn of the United Front, as the parties called themselves, to form the Government. The Janata Dal, which has the larger number of seats among them, chose Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda, the Janata Dal Chief Minister of Karnataka, as its leader, and he assumed office as India's 12th Prime Minister on June 1, heading a 11-party alliance.

Mr. Deve Gowda, born in 1933 into a farmer's family, was once tilling the soil and tending cattle in a remote village in Karnataka. This 'son of the soil' took a Diploma in Civil Engineering and worked as a civil contractor for a few years. He was soon drawn to politics and joined the Congress and became a member of the Assembly in 1962. He was made a minister in the first non-Congress Government of Karnataka in 1983.

In 1991, he successfully contested the Hassan seat for the Lok Sabha on Samajwadi Party ticket, but was called upon to lead the Janata Party when the State had elections in 1994. He held the post of Chief Minister for just 17 months, when the party decided to send him to Delhi as a prospective Prime Minister.





CHANDAMAMA

Golden Hour

A SPACE ADVENTURE

SPACE HERO DEVA REACHES MARS
IN HIS SPACE CRAFT CZORA TO
DESTROY THE NINE DRAGO BASES

JUST THEN -

ASTEROIDS!
WE ARE HIT!

ANY DAMAGE?

LOW ALTITUDE STEERING
SYSTEM DAMAGED

WE CAN MAKE ONLY
THREE TURNS BEFORE
IT BREAKS DOWN!

DEVA STUDIES THE TARGETS...

THREE TURNS. NINE
TARGETS. WE CAN'T
TAKE THEM ALL!

WE CAN!

HOW?



Golden Hour TEASERS



1

In 1938, a radio play broadcast in America, featuring an invasion by Martians panicked thousands of listeners.

On which novel was this play based? Who was the author?



2

She was the moon goddess of Roman mythology. The crescent moon was her bow and the moonbeams, her arrows.

What was the name of this goddess of ancient Rome?

3

In astronomy, what is a White Dwarf?



4

The planets spin from west to east, except one. Which is this planet that rotates from east to west?



This Portuguese navigator has two galaxies named after him. Who is he? What are the two galaxies called?



5

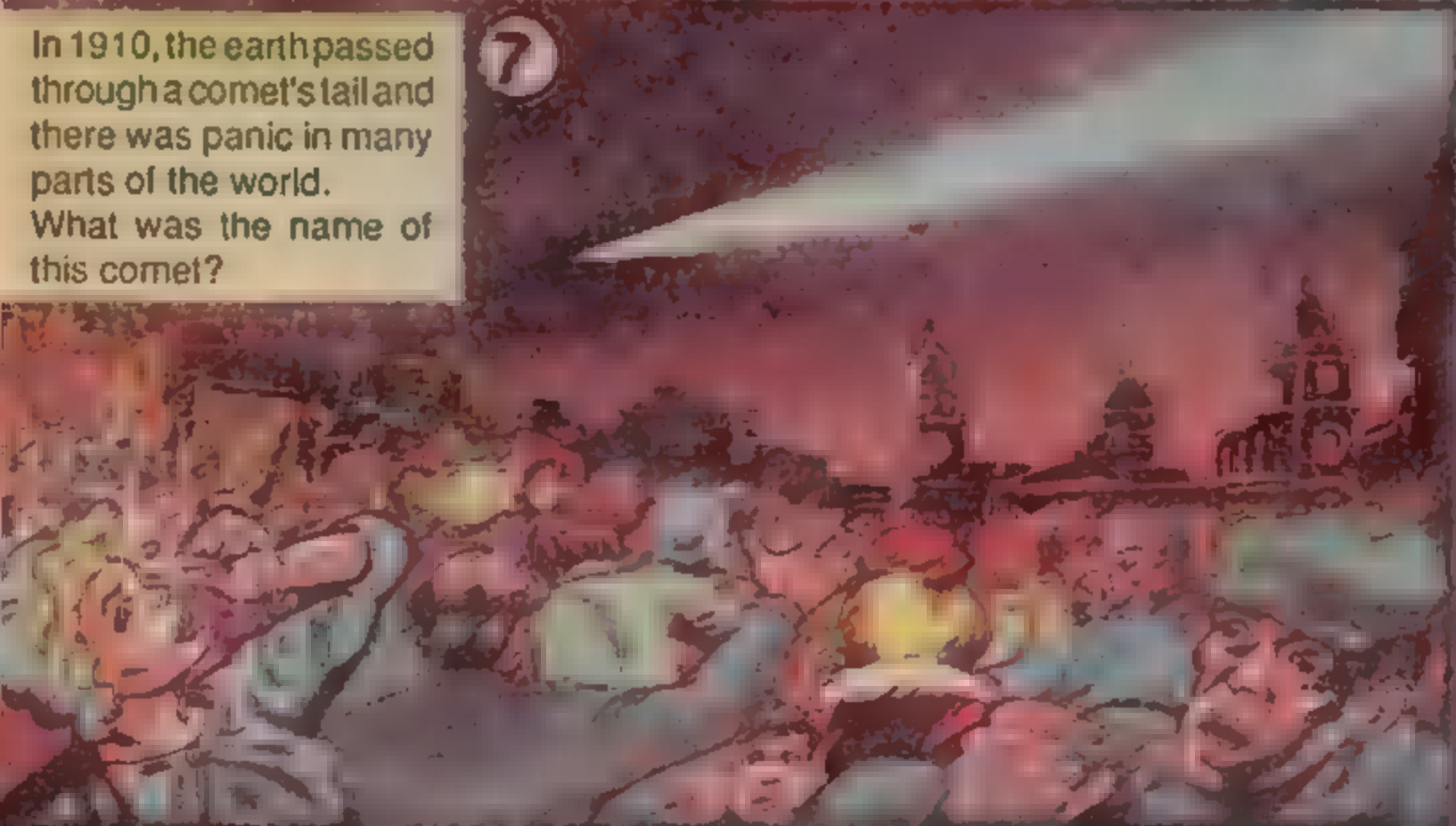
This crater made by a meteorite measures 1265 metres across and is about 183 metres deep. It is one of the biggest craters on earth. Where is it?



6

In 1910, the earth passed through a comet's tail and there was panic in many parts of the world. What was the name of this comet?

7



MAKE A MOULDED MASK

Make ■ moulded mask that fits your face, following these easy steps.

- 1) Make a mould about the size of your face from putty, and let it dry.



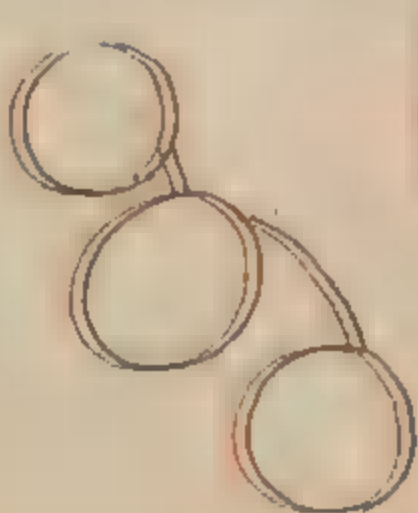
- 2) Tear up newspapers into small pieces and paste the pieces all over the mould. When the gum has dried, stick another layer of paper on to it and then, yet another and another – 4 layers in all. Let this dry for ■ week.

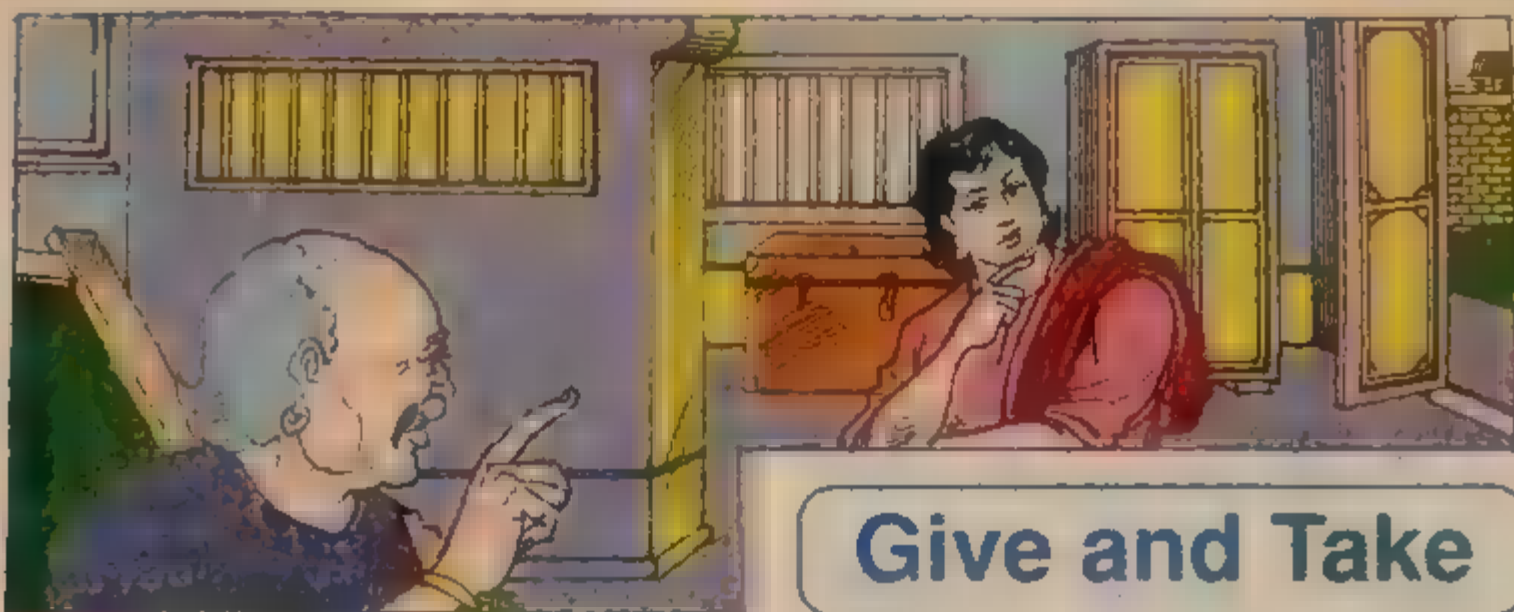


- 3) When your mask shell has dried, remove the putty and trim the mask. Cut holes for eyes, nose and mouth. You can now paint or apply make-up on the mask. Use wool for eyebrows and moustache.



Draw A CAT in 3 easy steps





Give and Take

Pasupati was getting old. He found it difficult to write accounts. He wanted to retire and wished that his son took over from him as accountant. He called his son, "Prabhakar, writing the village accounts is not an easy job. I'm going to entrust that work to you. I'm getting old, and I find it difficult to continue in the job. You must keep in mind something: Our welfare and progress. Our main earnings are from the farmers. When we deal with their accounts, they'll pay something; don't refuse it. And there is the Zamindar. You should please him. And he would pay a handsome salary."

Prabhakar took over from his father the work he had been doing for several years. He soon found that the village accounts were rather peculiar. It needed some practical knowledge and training. Pasupati supervised his work and gave him instructions off and on.

One day, farmer Narayana came

to meet the new accountant. He was proposing to sell his farm to someone. He wished to know how much he would have to pay to the zamindar from the sale proceeds.

Prabhakar examined the accounts and found that Narayana had not paid property tax for the previous five years. He was correctly paying the tax till five years ago. But now his name was in the list of defaulters. How did his father fail to notice this when he was dealing with Narayana's accounts for the last five years? It was shocking to him.

Prabhakar considered it as a major omission. But he did not disclose it to Narayana immediately. He decided to consult his father. Pasupati had an explanation. The poor among the farmers were afraid of the zamindar. So, they would regularly pay the taxes and preserve the receipts, and feel greatly relieved. On the other hand, the rich farmers would not care for the zamindar. The farmers dared him



to impose punishments. They would even bribe the accountants and escape detection of the default and punishment. Sometimes, the accountant would even transfer the payments made by the poor farmers in the names of the richer ones. The accountant would only be too willing to oblige the rich farmers for a consideration. Whenever the poor farmers were hauled up for default, the accountant would plead on their behalf and say they would pay up in due course, and the zamindar would forget the dues for the time being.

Prabhakar listened to his father very carefully. Somehow, he did not find the explanation quite convincing. He apprehended trouble for both

Narayana and the accountant. He was not happy about the way his accounts had been written. First he removed his name from the list of defaulters. He then gave him a receipt as if he had paid the property tax. Narayana compensated Prabhakar for his help. "I'm accepting the money for the present, but when I get my salary from the zamindar, I shall return it to you," said Prabhakar.

Both Narayana and the person who was buying the land from him expressed their gratitude to Prabhakar. The defaulters' list now had the name of Narendra in the place of Narayana!

Two years passed. Meanwhile, Pasupati passed away. Prabhakar went through all the rituals of the 11th day ceremonies. He then wanted to go on a month's pilgrimage, especially to Hardwar to immerse the ashes. The question was: who would write the accounts when he was away? Manohar Achari was Prabhakar's distant relative. He requested Achari, who readily agreed to take over the responsibility.

Once Prabhakar was away from the scene, Manohar Achari's efforts were to keep Prabhakar out of the picture and grab the lucrative post for himself for ever. He told all the rich farmers: "You all have been fools. Yours accounts do not show that you've to pay any dues to the zamindar. You've paid everything up to date.



And for whatever amounts you've paid, receipts should have been issued. And that was Prabhakar's responsibility. Only, you must act according to my directions and support me in case questions are raised later. We must see that Prabhakar is removed from this post. I can be of great help to you."

Prabhakar returned after a month. He had an uncanny feeling that some changes had taken place in the village. Mohan Achari was demanding production of receipts for all monies paid. The farmers brought them for verification, but were told that their names were in the list of defaulters and that the receipts were fake. Naturally, the farmers were agitated. They turned against Prabhakar who had issued the receipts even before he went away. He was now really in a predicament.

"Don't get upset by all this." Prabhakar tried to reassure the farmers. "Nobody can force you to make a second payment. There are rules and regulations for making payments and obtaining receipts. However, you must remember something. You had taken loans from the zamindar for cultivating banana. Instead, you've been growing sugarcane and paying less tax. That's not fair. If the zamindar were to come to know this, both you and I would get into trouble!"

The farmers agreed to his correcting the accounts and paying all that was due to the zamindar. Prabhakar heaved a sigh of relief. He decided that he would not make the poor farmers a scapegoat to help the rich farmers. Manohar Achari was sent back, and Prabhakar took over account-keeping once again.

- **Coming events cast their shadows**
- **The wolf changes his coat, but not his discipline**

Sorry, you've to start again!

★ *What does the expression 'Back to square A' mean? asks reader S.V. Ramana Murty, of Sreekurmam, Andhra Pradesh.*

The correct expression is 'back to square one'. It comes from the popular game Snakes-and-Ladders. On throwing the dice, you get a number by which you either climb up the ladder or come down the snake. You might even go back to the square numbered 1, meaning back to the original position with whatever problem you face, to start all over again.

★ *What is an 'Indian gift'? queries reader Jyotiranjan Biswal of Durgapur.*

A gift that is asked back, or for which a return gift is expected, is known as an 'Indian gift'. A person who takes back a gift that he or she has given is an 'Indian giver'. We, Indians, are not that mean, are we?

★ *Reader Manaswini Devi, of Binikayee, writes: In Candida, Prossy tells Burgess that in her opinion Marchbanks is not a normal person; he is "mad, mad as a March hare". What does the idiom mean?*

For hare, March (the beginning of spring) is the breeding season. March hare is a hare gambolling during this season—proverbially mad.

★ *Jitendra Samal, of Dhenkanal, wants to know, what is meant by 'from the horse's mouth'?*

It means, on good authority, or from a trustworthy source. You can say, you got it 'straight from the horse's mouth' that you have been chosen to play for your college.

★ *Reader Geeta Kamal, of Bangalore, has a doubt: The years 1900 to 1999 are called the 20th century. Why is it not called the 19th century?*

The years 1 to 99 form the first century A.D., if so, the years 1900 to 1999 should be the 20th century. Just count and see. Let us not grow smaller by a century by the time we reach the year 2000!

★ *Who is a humorist? And who a comedian? asks S. Lakshman Murty, of Waltair.*

A humorist is someone with an active sense of humour. Whereas, a comedian is an actor in a comedy or a professional entertainer, like a clown. Mark Twain was a humorist; Charlie Chaplin was a comedian (*comedienne* is the feminine gender).



SAGA OF ASHOKA THE GREAT

The story so far: While King Vindusar of Magadha is ill at his capital Pataliputra, there is a revolt in Taxila. The comfort-loving Crown Prince, Susima, is reluctant to face the rebels. But Prince Ashoka volunteers to march on Taxila. He suppresses the rebellion and returns to the capital. During his ceremonial entry into the city, Susima tries to kill him. But the plan fails.

"What a pity that while by now we should be happily listening to your report of your successful expedition, our attention must be diverted to such an ugly incident!" said King Vindusar with anguish. He had been informed of the treacherous attempt on Ashoka's life by his Prime Minister, Khallataka.

"I am afraid, the rebels of Taxila have their agents here. They were keen to take revenge on our son who crushed their rebellion. Couldn't it

be so, Khallataka?"

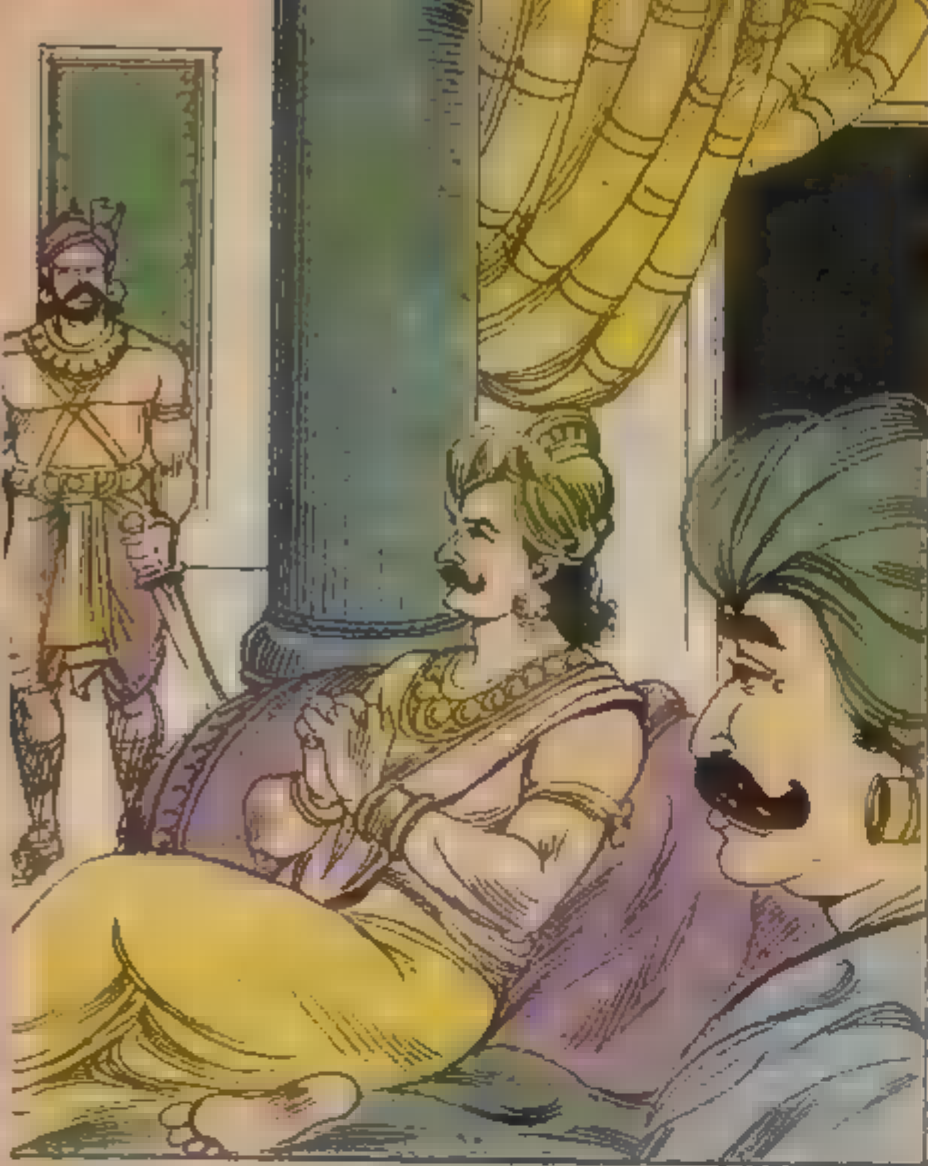
"The able Kotwal and his assistants are questioning the fellows who were taken prisoner after rolling the boulders on the victory procession. The Kotwal should be here any moment," said the Prime Minister.

"Hm. It seems you're suspecting other possibilities!" The king looked at his Prime Minister with curiosity.

"Your guess is correct, my lord!"

The king looked pale at Khallataka's answer. How much he

6. KING VINDUSAR LEARNS THE TRUTH



wished that the Kotwal's investigation should not bring to light anything embarrassing and disturbing!

Unfortunately, the outcome of the investigation did not go in favour of his wish. When the Kotwal entered the king's chamber, his face looked not only grave but also gloomy.

"Have you completed your investigation?" asked the king.

"Yes, my lord."

"Was it an accident?"

"Far from that, my lord. The boulders had been loosened and wooden planks kept under them so that they would roll down when the planks were tilted behind them. It must have been a laborious task. Not less than a hundred men must have been at

work."

"Unbelievable! How could they evade the eyes of our captain and our soldiers who were getting the place ready for the reception?" asked the king.

"Alas! One of the captains even helped the culprits with ideas!"

"How could he be so audacious? Can a Mauryan captain ever indulge in such treason?"

"He can, my lord, when he is coaxed and bribed by none other than the Mauryan Crown Prince!" said the Kotwal in a grim tone.

"Kotwal!"

"I'm sorry, my lord, but that's what my investigation reveals, and reveals clearly indeed."

There was a spell of silence. Then, slowly, the king said: "I fully trust you, my worthy Kotwal, and I praise you, for, bringing such a report to me wouldn't have been something pleasant for you."

"My lord, my heart breaks as I bring this to your notice," said the Kotwal.

"My dear officer, you've to steel your heart even more. In the interest of the empire, for the sake of our beloved king, and for the prestige of the house of Maurya, the mystery of this attack must not become public. Every one of those fellows, who were fleeing after doing their job and were captured, the captain whom you have taken prisoner, and those of the sol-

diers who know about it, must not be in a position to utter a word about it!" said Prime Minister Khallataka, addressing the Kotwal. Then, looking at the king, he said: "Do I have your approval, my lord?"

"You're wise, my Prime Minister!" the king smiled with sadness.

"Prime Minister, Sir! But, together they would number more than a hundred!" murmured the Kotwal.

"Even so, they must be silenced forever – and the work must be done before the sun rises. In the morning, the royal heralds should go about telling the people that the attack on Prince Ashoka's procession had been masterminded by the rebel-leaders of Taxila and that those who executed the plan have been executed!" said the minister.

"I understand..." the Kotwal looked at the king and said falteringly.

"My dear Kotwal, would you hesitate to destroy a thousand men in order to protect the empire?" asked the king.

"Never!" promptly replied the Kotwal.

"Well, the rumour and gossip of a rivalry between the Crown Prince and Ashoka, too, would wreck the empire! And your prisoners are the ones who could spread the rumour!" said the king.

"I understand, my lord." This time the Kotwal's voice sounded firm.



"Good. Go and do what is necessary at midnight, not too early, not too late," said the king.

The Kotwal bowed to the king and went out. Along the corridor he came across Crown Prince Susima.

"Kotwal!" called out Susima. "Is it true that the captain who was taken prisoner has implicated me in the conspiracy to kill Ashoka?"

"It is so. I'm sorry to say."

"He's a liar. He ought to die for his lies!" said Susima.

The Kotwal stood stunned. Was this the prince who was going to be their master in the future?

"Has the king been told about the captain's mischief?"

"The king has been told about the



captain's confession, my lord!"

"Does the king believe it?"

"I can't say, my lord!"

"What was the king's reaction?"

"It is difficult for me to say that, but he came to the decision that not only the captain but all those who took part in the attack on the procession should be put to death!"

The Crown Prince clapped his hands.

"My father is as wise as myself, his son! Ha, ha!!" exclaimed Susima. "Do you see my point, Kotwal?"

"I do, indeed!" said the Kotwal, suppressing his strong urge to slap the Crown Prince.

The General of the Magadhan army was heading for the king's

chamber. He greeted the Crown Prince and the Kotwal greeted the General.

"I was going to you, General!" said the Kotwal.

"Wait for me, then. I'll be back soon," said the General.

"It seems the king has summoned you and me at the same time!" observed the Crown Prince as he and the General stepped into the king's presence.

"Good that I've got together you three who matter most. Please sit down."

The Prime Minister, the General, and the Crown prince occupied the cushioned seats kept beside the king's bed.

A moment or two passed in silence. Then the king fixed his eyes on the Crown Prince. "My son," he said, "I don't want to believe what I hear."

"I don't know what you've heard, Father!"

"I don't believe this, either. You know what I've heard. Well, even though it is time which will decide the course of events, let's not waste time. The Prime Minister and the General tell me that we must send one of the princes as our regent to Ujjain, the headquarters of one of our great provinces, Avanti. Barring you and Ashoka, no other prince deserves the position. And, frankly, we want you and Ashoka to live apart, until you

grow wise enough to live as brothers and not as foes."

Susima sat silent.

"Will you proceed to Ujjain?" the king asked Susima pointblank.

"I would like to remain here."

"You were given the option as the elder prince. All right, let Ashoka be in Ujjain. I'm sure, he'll not murmur at my advice. You may go."

Susima left the room, brooding over the fact that the king referred to him as the elder prince instead of as the Crown Prince.

★ ★ ★

"Kotwal, Sir! Please give me a chance to meet the Crown Prince! He alone can save me! I only did whatever he had asked me to do," appealed the captain, when he was

being led to the execution ground, along with a hundred odd other prisoners.

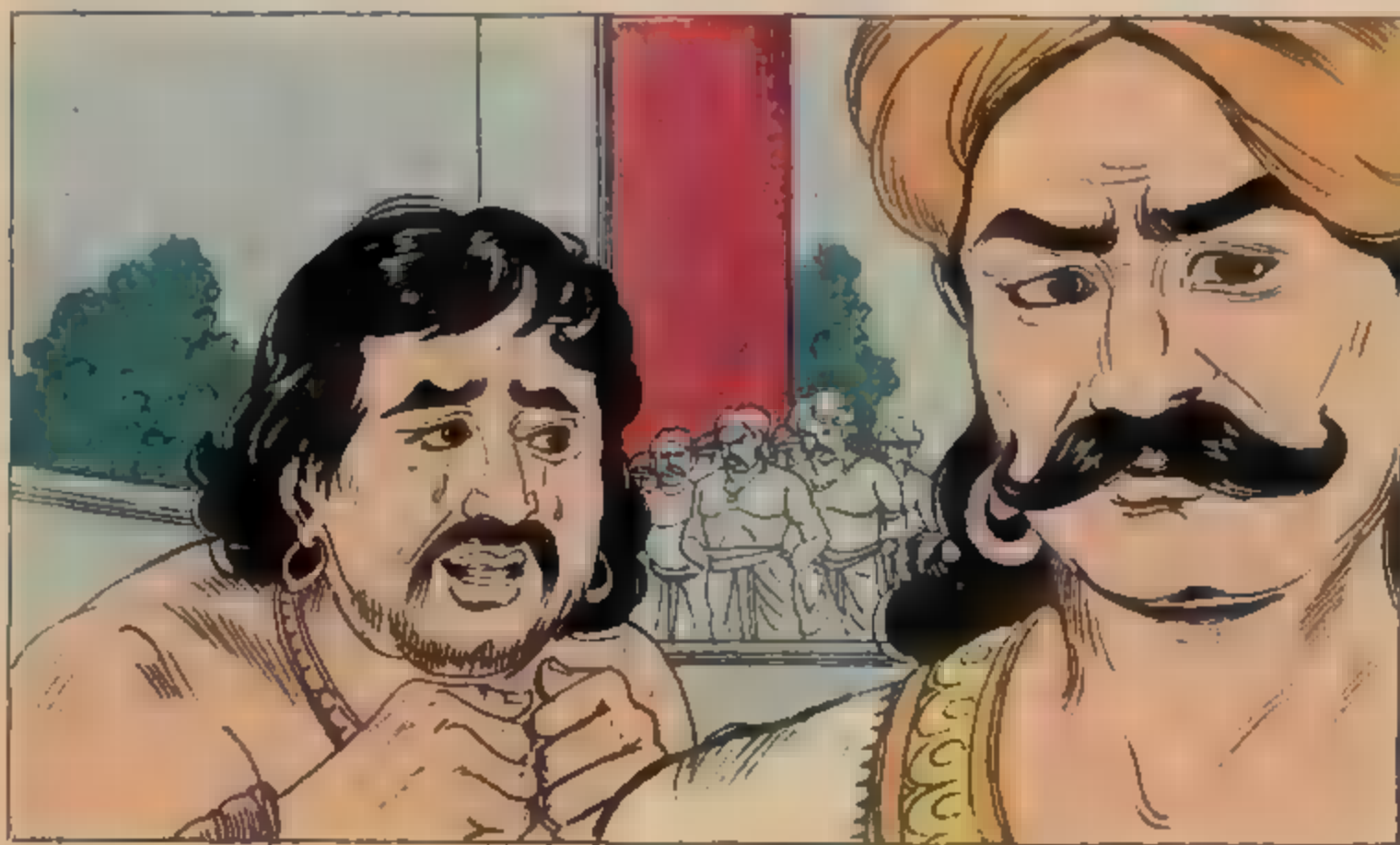
"My unfortunate friend, the Crown Prince himself opined that you ought to die. At this last moment of your life, I shall not utter a lie to you!" said the Kotwal.

"What! The Crown Prince wishes me to die?" the Captain cried, without wanting to believe it.

"Right, because, according to him, your implicating him in the plan to attack the procession was a lie!"

"Let a hundred curses fall on Susima's head!" cried out the hapless captain. They were his last words before the executioner's sword fell on his neck.

(To continue)



CHILDREN IN THE NEWS

WORLD ON HER FINGER-TIPS

How many countries are there in Africa? What is the capital of Turkmenistan? What is the currency of Uzbekistan. These were some of the questions put to Monica Menon when she was invited by the Press Club of Bombay. She had the answers on her finger-tips. For that matter, she was prepared to reel out the names of the capitals of as many as 185 nations of the world and their currencies. The wonder is, Monica is only five years old and studying in Class I. She faced the members of the Club for one full hour and not once did she falter in her answers. Then her mother, Vanaja Menon, took over. It appears, on a December evening, she went home with an unusual gift for her daughter—a globe. After that, there was no stopping little Monica. In the next three months, she learnt everything about the countries she could identify on the globe. Father Murali Menon remembered having seen Monica poring over the pages of the encyclopaedias in their modest home library. The parents did

not think much of that, then. He feels children have inborn talents, and if parents were to spend some time with them every day, this can be detected even at a young age.

HIGH RATE OF INTELLIGENCE

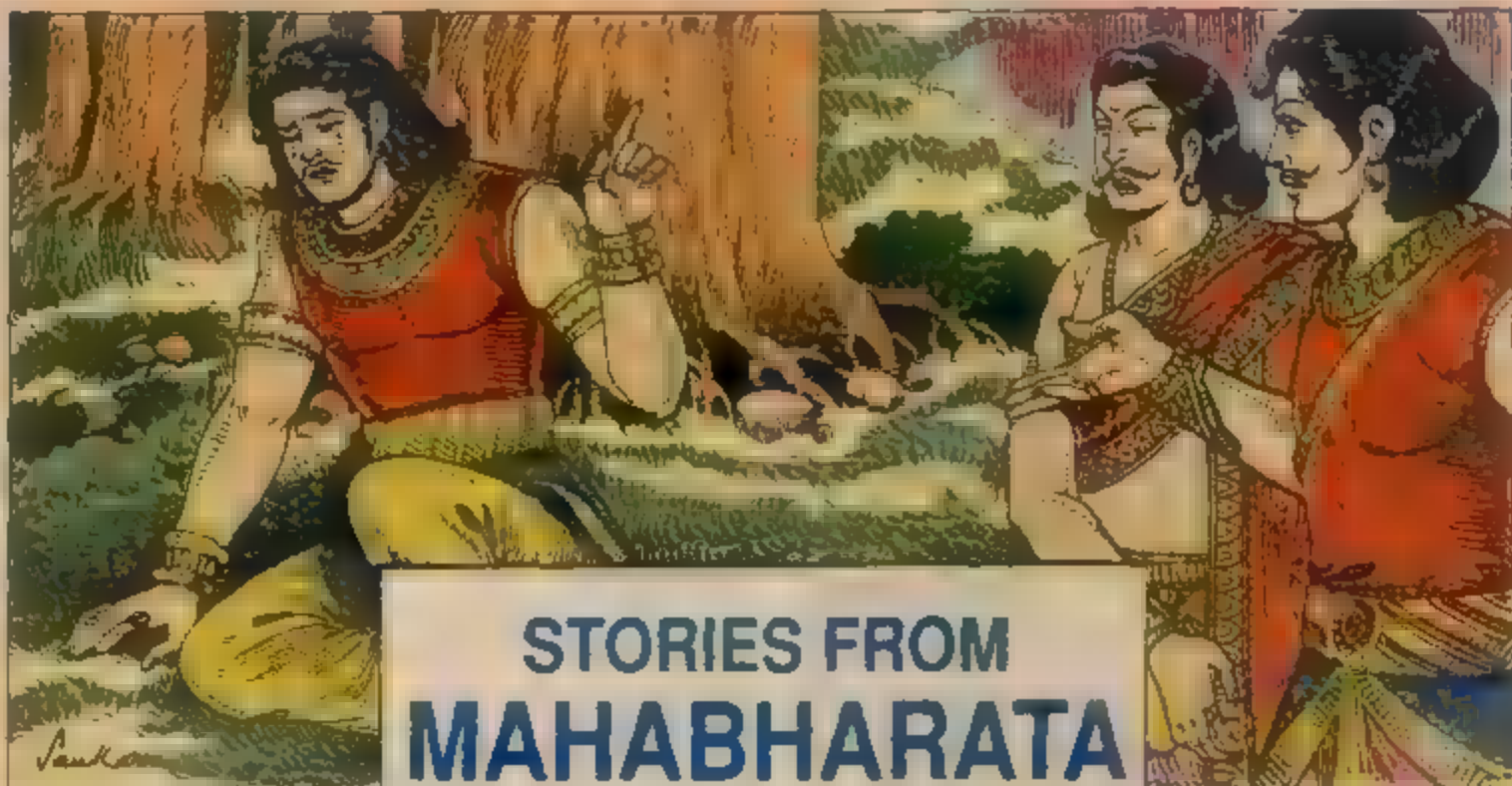
MENSA is an international organisation of people with a very high level of intelligence. There are 40,000 members in Britain alone. The youngest of them is only three years. Rhiannon Payne, of western England, scored the maximum rating in intelligence tests before she was admitted a member. She is able to read books which children twice her age usually read. Rhiannon has just joined the Nursery Class.

PROFICIENCY IN CHINESE

And here's Dong Dong from South China. She is not yet three years, but she can read 3,000 characters in the Chinese language, which is made up of some 6,000 basic characters. They form different words or expressions with the addition of "strokes", "hooks", and "loops". When she was just 20 months, Dong Dong could also recite more than 200 poems and nursery rhymes and write more than 10,000 words. Little wonder, then, she had no difficulty in getting into the Shanghai Guinness Book of World Records.

A FRIEND OF NATURE

He calls it 'Panchvati'—after the famous forest where Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana spent a major part of their exile from Ayodhya. For Harsh Batra, an 8th class student of Delhi, his Panchvati will be the ultimate in protecting environment. He revealed his pet project when he addressed a special session of the United Nations on Environment. He suggested the formation of Eco-clubs and wanted conferences to be held all over the world to promote the idea. He firmly believes that somewhere in the universe can still be found a world which is environment-friendly and preserving ecology. Children from 80 countries attended this session. Harsh Batra was the lone representative from India. This 12-year-old boy, if he so wishes, can spend all his leisure hours in the company of satellite TV and computers. But Harsh Batra is different from other children of his age. He spends all that time with Nature.



STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA

The story so far...

The Pandava princes ■■ undergoing twelve years of exile, suffering many privations. But now, eleven years have passed and soon the princes will have ■ spend one more year in complete hiding. If they are discovered during this year, they will have to remain in exile for twelve more years.

At Hastinapura, the Kaurava princes gloat over the suffering of the Pandavas. Duryodhana, aided and abetted by the evil Sakuni and the proud Karna, goes to the Dwaita forest at the head of an army, to mock at the Pandava princes. In the forest, Duryodhana angers the Gandharvas. The king of the Gandharvas captures Duryodhana. The Kaurava army flees in panic.

Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandava princes, arranges for Duryodhana to be released, and Duryodhana rides back to Hastinapura at the head of his defeated army, embittered and ashamed at being beaten in ■ battle and having ■ be rescued by the Pandava princes.

On their journey back to Hastinapura, Sakuni and Karna tried hard to make light of the unfortunate affair, and wove a story as to how the Pandavas must have conspired with the Gandharvas to bring about the disgrace of Duryodhana.

But Duryodhana refused to listen to their comforting words and in the end, in ■ fit of temper and terrible depression, threw himself down under ■ tree and vowed to stay there till

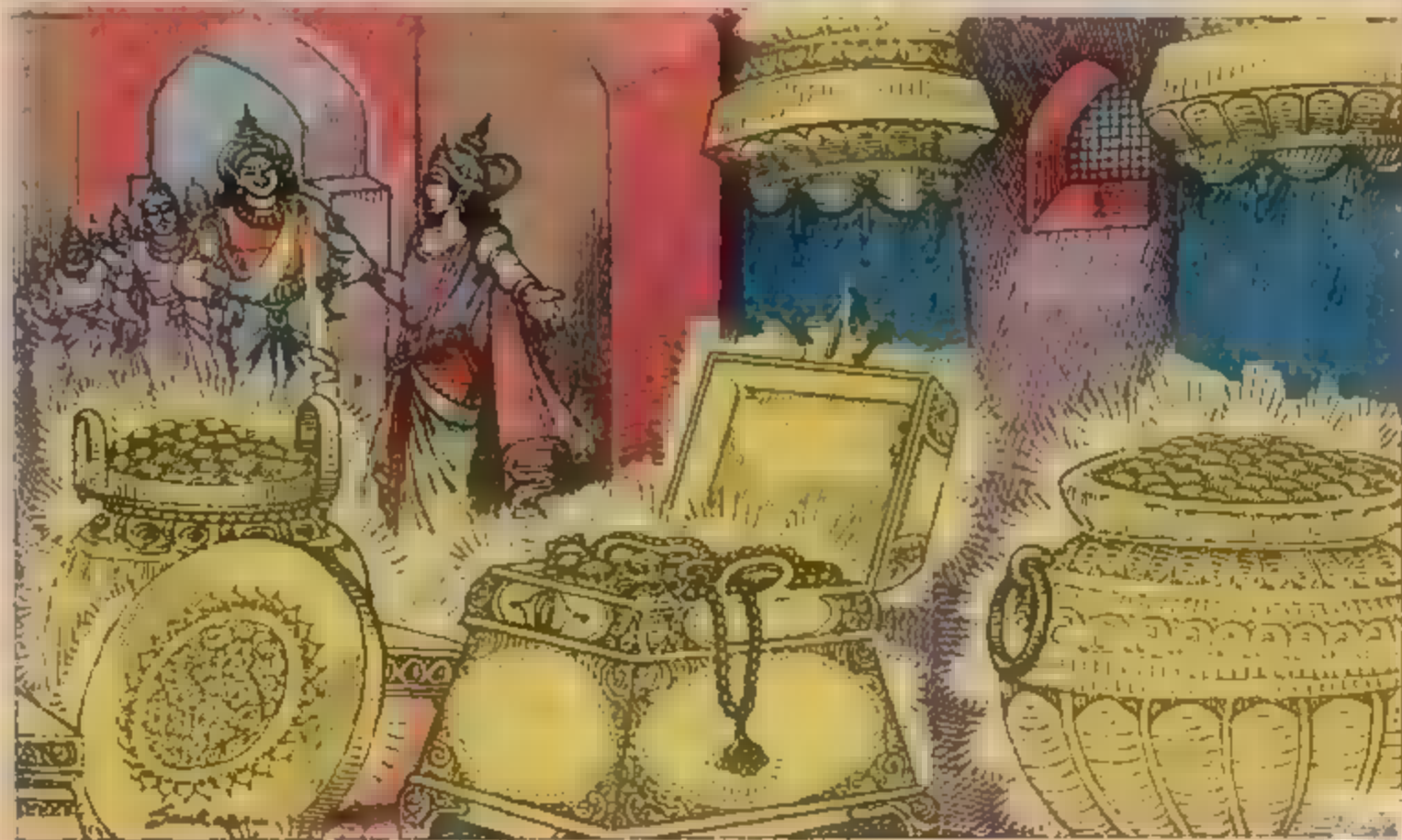
he died, than return to Hastinapura and be subjected to ridicule. Sakuni refused to be dismayed at this display of wounded vanity and, in a sarcastic voice, upbraided Duryodhana: "Why do you act like a spoilt child? We've cheated the Pandavas out of their kingdom and we possess all their riches. One minor reverse is nothing. The day will surely dawn when we shall exterminate the Pandavas, and you'll become the emperor of all the domains."

The thought of being proclaimed emperor appealed to Duryodhana's vanity and, when Karna talked in glowing terms of a great Rajasuya sacrifice, Duryodhana pulled himself out of his spell of depression and agreed to return to Hastinapura.

When the court at Hastinapura learnt of what had occurred in the Dwaita forest, the blind king, Dhritarashtra, his mind filled with omens of evil days to come, sat in silence. But the aged Bhishma, seething with anger, pointed an accusing finger at Duryodhana and proclaimed in a solemn voice: "You've done everything to bring humiliation to the Kuru race. Now the Pandava princes had to rescue you from disgrace and dishonour. Let there be an end to your foolishness. Wake up and acknowledge their rightful inheritance."

Glowering with rage, Duryodhana walked out of the assembly followed by his cronies. "Bhishma is an old fool," muttered Karna. Then, turning to Duryodhana, he pleaded: "Give me an army and I'll conquer all the surrounding kingdoms. Then you'll be able to perform the Rajasuya sacrifice and prove to everyone that you're invincible."

These were pleasant words to Duryodhana's depraved mind and, without consulting Dhritarashtra, a large army was fitted out and Karna given full command for a campaign to make every ruler swear fealty to Duryodhana. Karna, with all his faults, was a great warrior, and with a strong force, he quickly subjugated a number of kingdoms and, mainly with threats, forced the rulers to acknowledge Duryodhana as their overlord.



When the triumphant Karna returned to Hastinapura, laden with the vast treasures he had got from the docile kingdoms, Duryodhana was overjoyed and immediately proclaimed that he would perform the Rajasuya sacrifice. But the priests, on being consulted, objected strongly. "Duryodhana cannot perform the Imperial sacrifice when King Dhritarashtra is alive," intoned the high priest. "If he wants, he can perform the Vaishnava sacrifice."

Duryodhana had to be content with this pronouncement but so planned that the sacrifice should not be wanting in splendour and that every ruler in the country be prevailed upon to attend it. Even the Pandava princes should be invited, said the gleeful Duryodhana.

When Yudhishtira received the

invitation, he told the messenger: "It's only right that Duryodhana performed the Vaishnava sacrifice. But whilst we are in exile, we are banned from entering Hastinapura."

With great pomp and ceremony the sacrifice was performed at Hastinapura and Duryodhana in his elation made doubly sure that the Pandava princes were told about the number of kings who attended the event and all the minute details of the lavish festivities.

In their hermitage, Yudhishtira listened to the story of the sacrifice with a grim smile. Draupadi as well as his brothers had suffered much during these long years of exile. Often, there was not enough to eat, all because he had allowed himself to be enticed to gamble everything away in a play of dice. But he took solace in the words



of sage Vyasa, who had on his last visit said: "My children, do not despair, for soon your years of banishment will end and you'll regain your rightful kingdom."

Soon after this, the sage Durvasa with all his ten thousand disciples descended on Hastinapura, demanding in his forthright manner that all his people be provided with shelter and food. Sage Durvasa was notorious for his endless demands and his ten thousand disciples consumed so much food that even the richest kingdom found it difficult to feed such a hungry horde for any considerable length of time.

Duryodhana, looking at all the food the sage and his disciples were consuming, suddenly had a bright idea. Calling his uncle Sakuni and Karna, he said, rubbing his hands with glee,

"I've an inspiration. Let's ask sage Durvasa and his disciples to visit the Pandavas. With their meagre supply of food, they'll hardly be able to feed this formidable army. And, when they fail, the sage may very well lay a terrible curse upon them."

And so it came about that late one night, after the Pandavas had gone to sleep, they were awakened by an incessant clamouring outside their hermitage. When they came out, they were confronted by sage Durvasa and his great flock of disciples all demanding food.

Draupadi, knowing well that there was no food in the hermitage even for ten people, let alone ten thousand, was horrified, and in her dilemma, she turned to Sri Krishna and prayed fervently that he came to their rescue.

(To continue)



IMMORTAL FRIENDSHIP - 3

By BUJJAI

SOMEONE WITH A SWORD JUMPS ON SUMITRA, WHO GIVES A BLOW



You haven't given me time to tell you who I am!

MEANWHILE

Who're you? Why

have you come here?



I'm Sumitra! Your friend only! See this 'Raja Mudra'!



And no one saw you coming here?

No.



Our king is anxious to know the welfare of our Gurudev! I've come to take him back!



After his arrival here, the situation has only worsened!

Then?



We shifted him to another safe place nearby. And that...



SINGHI DORA OVERHEARS THEIR CONVERSATION.



Sumitra may suspect that I overheard their talk. Better I go away before he comes back!



AFTER
SOME
TIME,
SUMITRA
COMES
BACK.

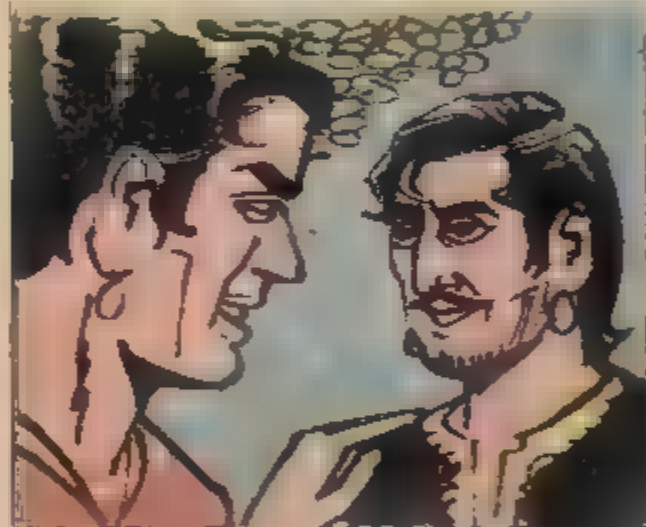


I'm fortunate in having a friend like you! I can never forget your help.

Don't praise me! Did you meet your Gurudev?



No, but I found out his place. I shall go there ~~tomorrow~~ night!



SUMITRA AND
SINGHI DORA
REACH THEIR
HIDE-OUT.



Sir! Did you meet your Gurudev?

No, but as good as meeting him!



You and brother Singhi have helped me a lot! I can never forget your help!



NEXT MORNING,
SINGHI DORA GOES
TO THE PALACE.



I wish to meet the Minister! I've some important news!



LITTLE IS DONE WHEN EVERY MAN IS MASTER

SINGHIDORA
IS USHERED
IN...

Pray, believe me, sir. See
these things! All of them
can be caught in one go!



All right! Now, we'll pay
half and the balance
after they're all caught.



If you deceive us, your
head will be off! Beware!



We're eating your bread, sir!
How dare we deceive you?

All right!

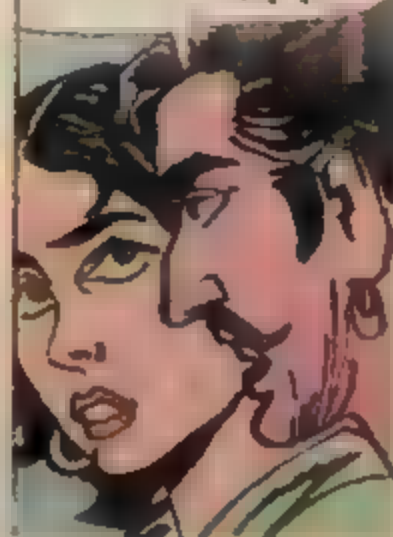


AT THE
HIDE OUT.

My dear! So much
money! From where?



Hush! I got it from
somewhere! Keep quiet!



He used to tell me all about
his thefts!... but now...



Tell me! From whom have
you looted this?



SUMITRA OVERHEARS THE TALK



MASTERS TWO, WILL NOT DO



**FIRE AND WATER ARE GOOD SERVANTS
BUT BAD MASTERS**

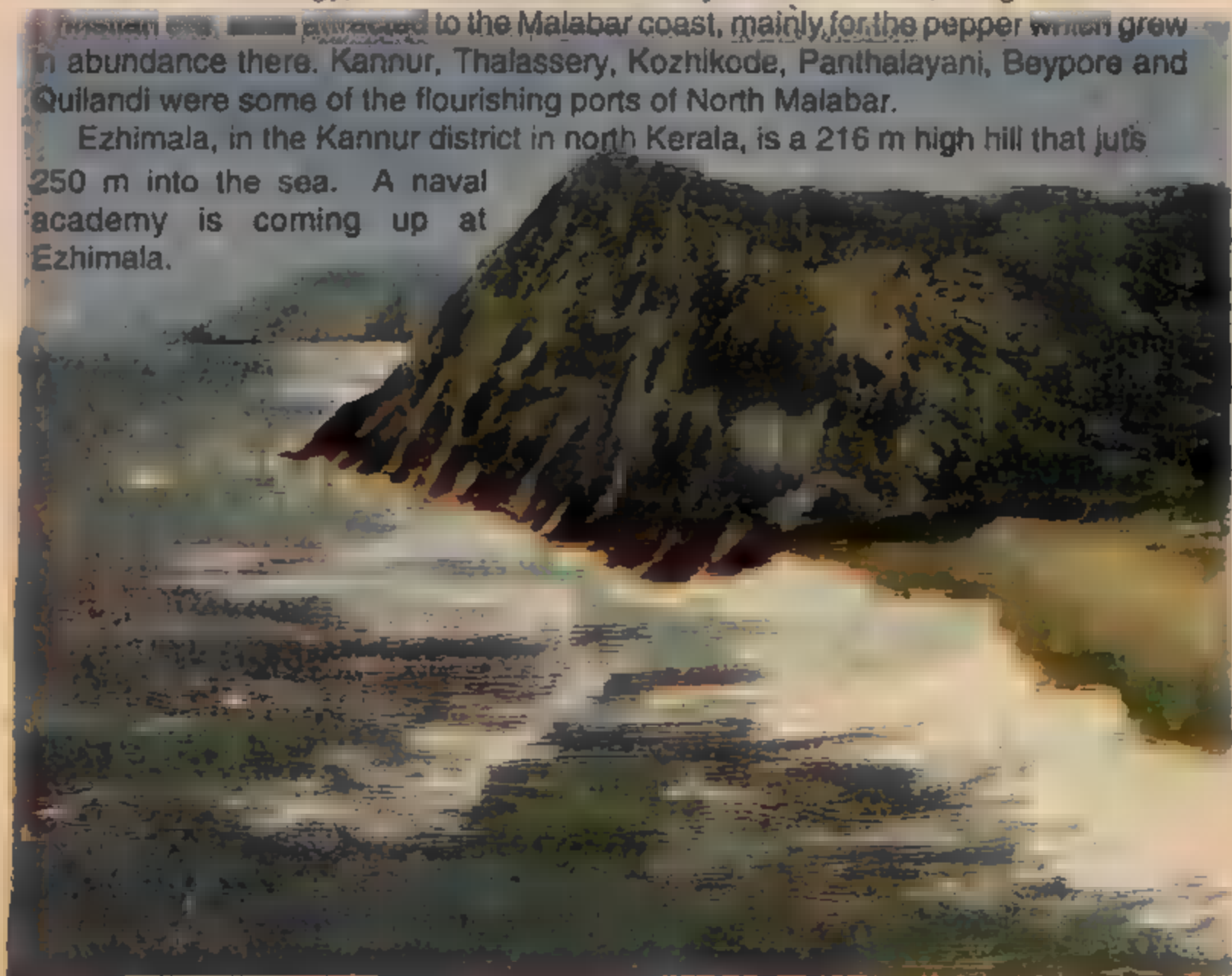
In the Land of the Keras

TEXT : MEERA NAIR
ARTIST : GOPAKUMAR

As we move southwards down the west coast of India, Karnataka gives way to the almost 550 km long, narrow, green coastal strip of Kerala — the land of *Keras* or coconut palms. It was originally called 'Cheralam', meaning the land added by the recession of the sea. Parasurama is believed to have created ■ by flinging his axe into the sea. However, according to geologists, the land of Kerala was formed as ■ result of volcanic activity, much after the Indian landmass ■ formed.

Traders from Egypt, Arabia, Greece, Assyria and Rome, long before the Christian era, frequented the Malabar coast, mainly for the pepper which grew in abundance there. Kannur, Thalassery, Kozhikode, Panthalayani, Beypore and Quilandi were some of the flourishing ports of North Malabar.

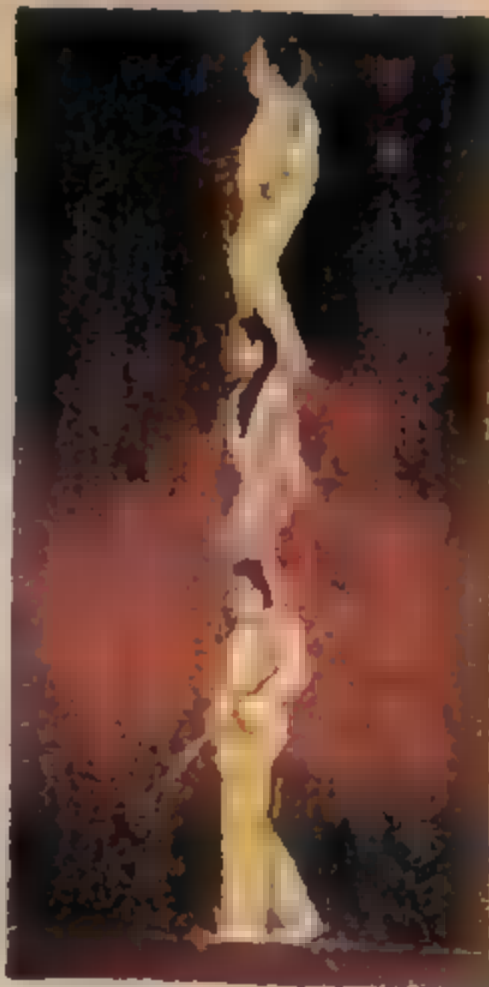
Ezhimala, in the Kannur district in north Kerala, is a 216 m high hill that juts 250 m into the sea. A naval academy is coming up at Ezhimala.



The Rocky Coast near Ezhimala

The Indian circus industry has its beginnings in Kerala. Almost all the leading circus troupes of the country are run by Malayalees from the Kannur - Thalassery area. The first circus training institute was founded at Thalassery in 1901 by Kunhiraman, who was a great master of the martial art of Kerala — Kalarippayat.

South of Thalassery is Mahe, a picturesque coastal town which is part of the Union Territory of Pondicherry. ■ ■ ■ once called Mayyazhi but ■ ■ ■ renamed Mahe in honour of Captain Bertrand Francois Mahe de Labourdonnais, who seized the town for the French. When the French left India they offered French citizenship to all those who were living in their former



possessions. So there are many French citizens of Indian origin in the Union Territory. The French parliament has a member to represent these overseas citizens of France.

Vadakkekara or Badagara, south of Mahe is ■ centre of trade and commerce. Pepper and coconut products are the main items of trade. Badagara is also the birthplace of Taccholi Othenan, the great folk hero of North Malabar. The daring exploits of this warrior, who died at the young age of 32 are immortalised in

Vadakkan Pattukal, the ballads of North Malabar. Ceremonies in Othenan's honour are conducted every year ■ a temple near Badagara.



Kalarippayat, the martial art of Kerala

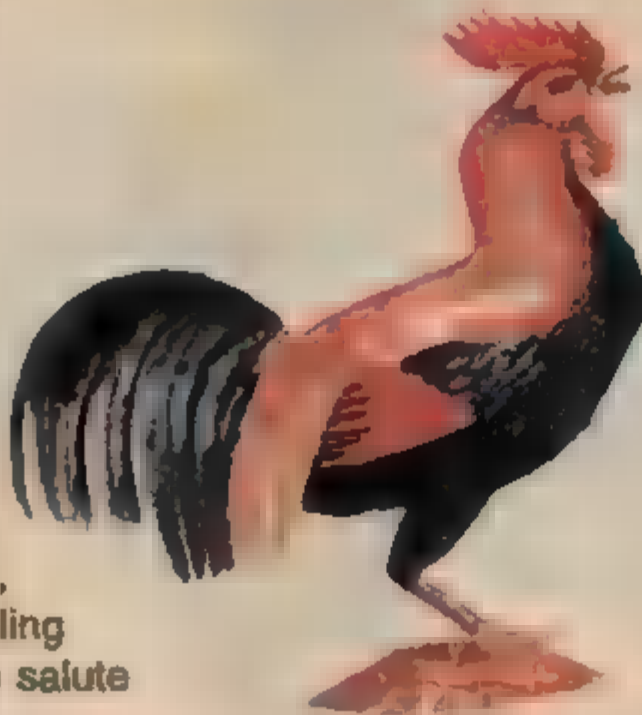
**Kozhikode, the land
where the cock crows**

Moving further
south we come
to Panthalayani,
which is a place
of considerable
historical
importance.

There is a 7th
century mosque
here which is
almost identical to
the one ■ Mecca.
In days gone by,
Arab vessels sailing
past would stop to salute
this mosque.

On the seashore, close to the mosque
is ■ footprint which the local people
believe was made by Adam when he
stepped on Indian soil en route to Lanka.

Further south is Kozhikode, ■ known
as Calicut. In the 9th century A.D.,
Cheraman Perumal, the last king of
Malabar, left for Mecca after distributing his
lands among the various chieftains of his



kingdom. To one of
them, the Zamorin,
he gave all the
land over which
a cock crowing
from the Tall
temple could
be heard.

The land
was called
Kozhikode, the
land where the
cock crows.

'Zamorin'
was a hereditary title.
It was ■ corruption of
the word 'Samuthiri' which
means, 'Lord of the Seas'.

The Zamorins with the help of
their admirals, known as the Kunjali
Marakkars made Kozhikode a
powerful maritime principality.

**Vasco da
Gama meets
the Zamorin**



The Chinese traded with Kozhikode early in the 15th century, exchanging gold, silver, copper and silk for pepper, cinnamon, ginger and cotton cloth.

It was near Kozhikode that Vasco da Gama landed in May 1498. It was an epoch-making event in history. Vasco da Gama's discovery of the sea route to India opened up the country and the rest of Asia to the West and changed the destinies of many nations.

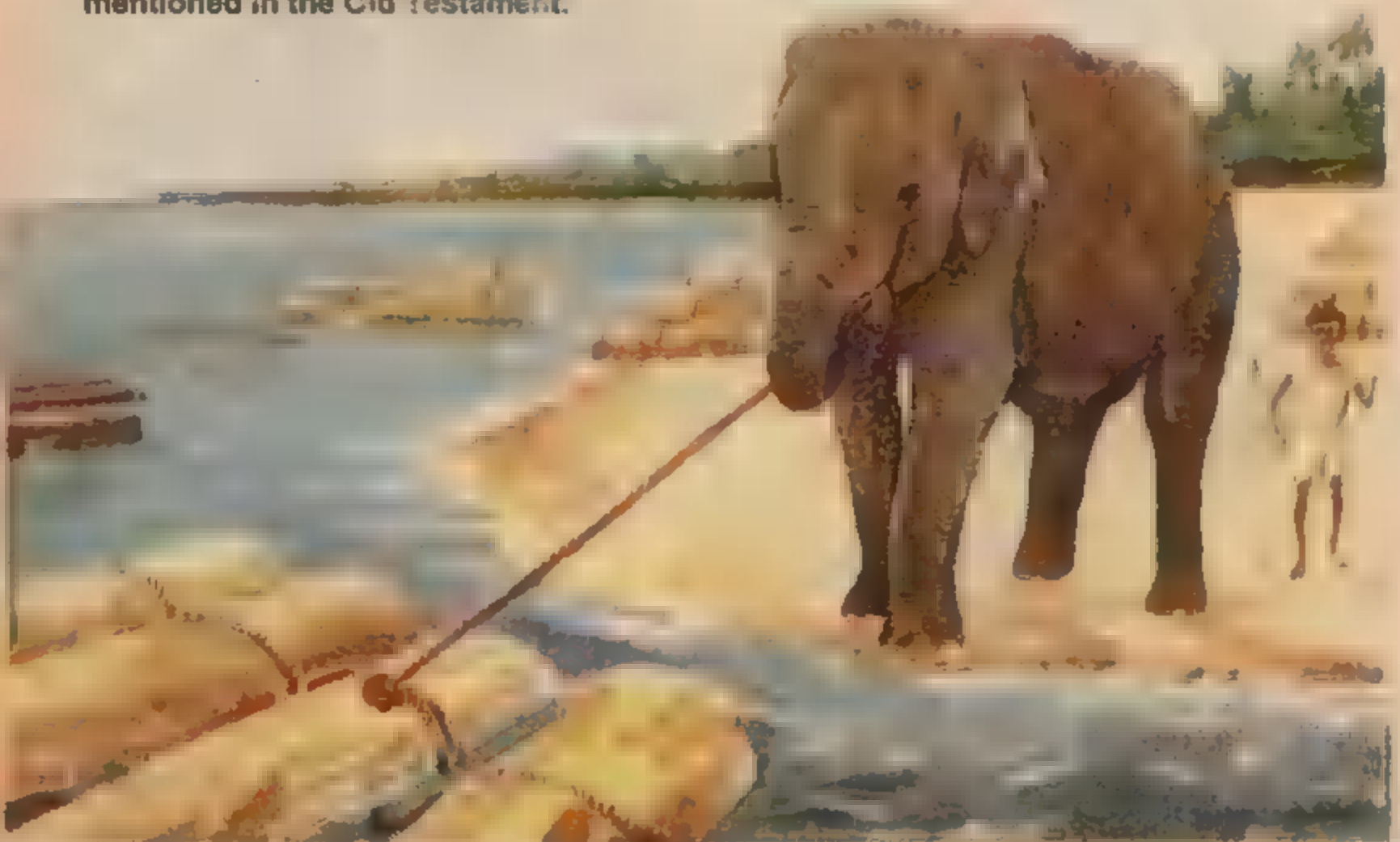
The Zamorin received the Portuguese courteously but he was not impressed with the presents they had brought — hats, striped cloth, strings of coral beads and wash-basins. The Portuguese asked for trading facilities at Calicut. The Zamorin was evasive at first but later gave them permission to build ■ fort at Calicut.

The English first appeared in Calicut in 1615 but it became a possession of the English East India Company only in 1792, following ■ treaty with Tipu Sultan.

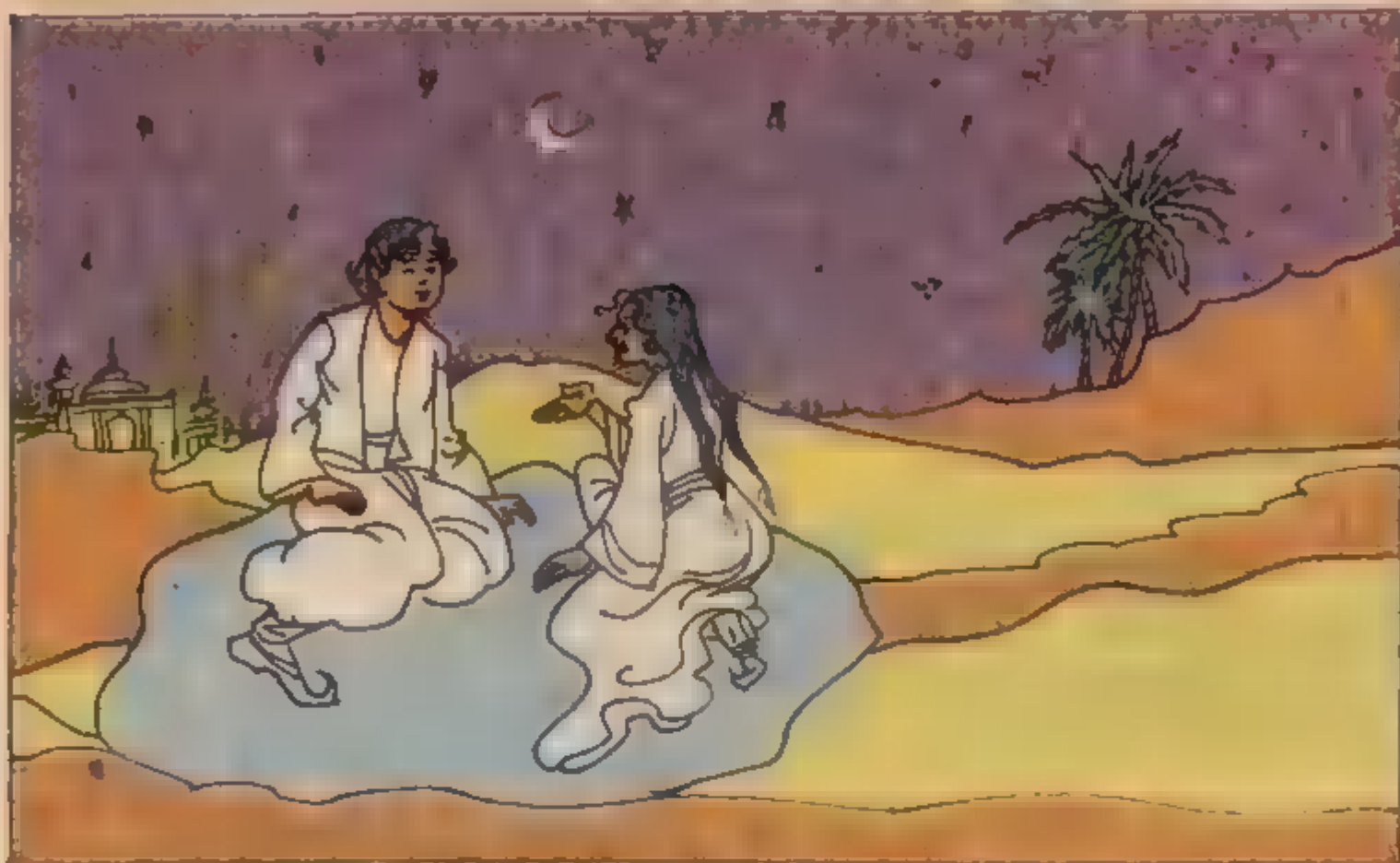
Today Kozhikode is a centre of the timber industry. One of the largest timber yards in the world is situated in its suburb, Kallai.

Nine kilometres to the south of Kozhikode is the coastal town of Beypore. Tipu Sultan called it 'Sultan Pattanam' and made it his capital of Malabar. The town has ■ boat-building yard and trades in coconut products.

An elephant lugging timber.
Kerala's teak was used by Solomon
in the building of the temple
mentioned in the Old Testament.



THE MAGIC THRONE



In days gone by, there nestled a little hamlet on the outskirts of a sandy desert. There lived a young farmer called Sohail. He was an orphan, his parents having died several years ago leaving behind only a small plot of land. From daybreak till nightfall he toiled on it, but however hard he worked, he earned just enough to buy him his daily bread.

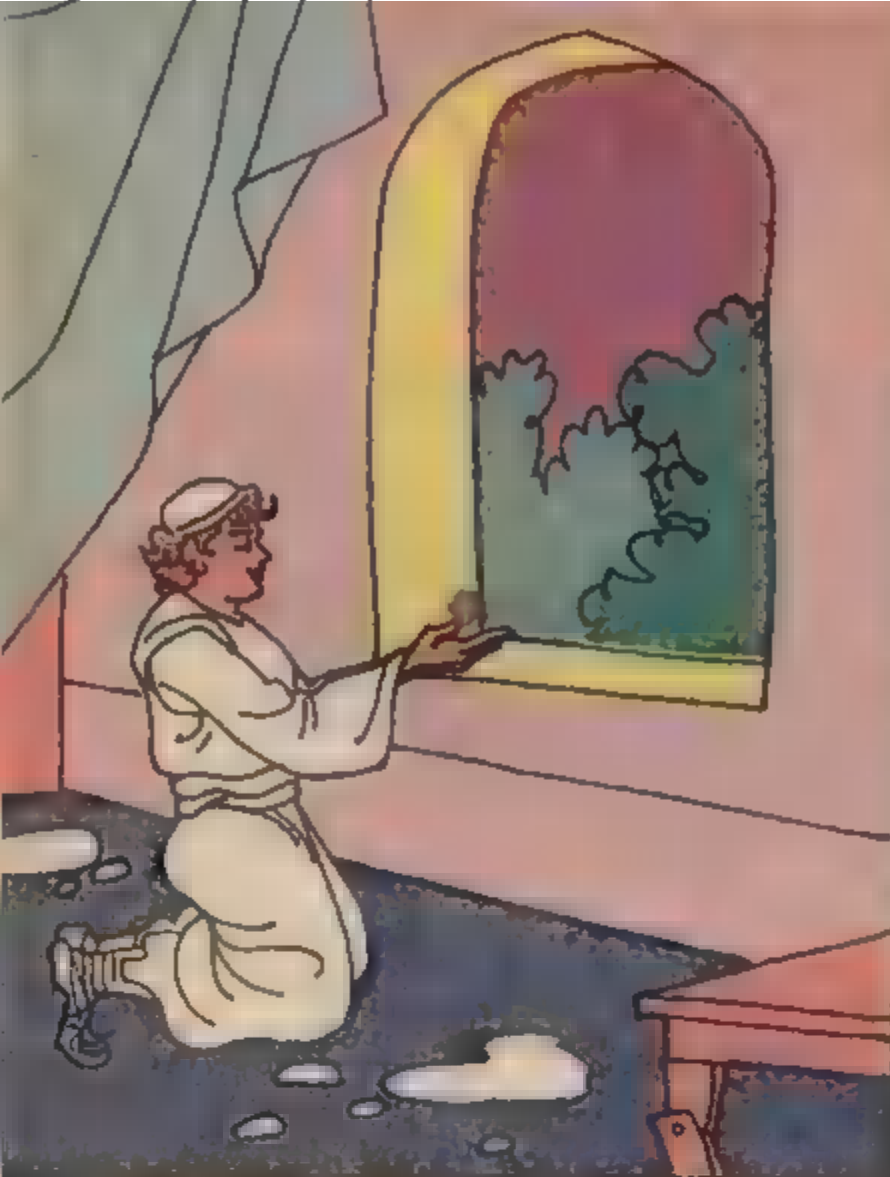
'Do I have to labour thus all my life and be satisfied with a paltry sum of money?' he would often sadly ask himself.

In fact, even as a child, he always

aspired to be a king one day and rule a beautiful and happy little realm. But, alas, he knew not how to fulfil his dream. How could he, a poor helpless farmer that he was?

Had it not been for the love and affection bounteously poured on him by sweet Tasmina, the good shoemaker's daughter, life would have been really unbearable for the young Sohail.

As the sun set over the sand-dunes, the two would often sit under the open sky and wonder at the twinkling little stars beginning to peep out one



after another. There, in the hushed silence of the twilight, they would commune with each other, sharing their fondest thoughts.

"Dear Sohail, why do you look so sad and lost?" tenderly asked Tasmina one such evening.

"Indeed, I'm tired of these stretches of hot sand and this boring and worthless life," replied Sohail, throwing up his hands in despair.

"So, you're soon going to leave us for a far and better place, are you?" gently enquired the shoemaker's daughter.

"Alas, where shall I go, ■ poor hapless farmer that I am?" replied the orphan in ■ dejected tone.

"What about your dreams, then,

Sohail?"

"Ha, my foolish dreams? They're like castles of sand for the desert wind to blow them off in a trice. I shall live and perish ■ poor helpless man on the endless sands of the desert. Perhaps only an Aladdin's lamp can give me the happiness I seek and make something out of my life," the youth said in a melancholy strain.

"Great sages of the East have said, 'Happiness lies deep within man himself.' Nevertheless, Sohail, have you ever prayed for such a lamp which, you believe, can give you happiness?" asked the other.

"Prayed? Don't speak like a little child, Tasmina. You know very well that there never was such a lamp! It's only a fantasy, as unreal as the mirage of the desert!" he replied, dismissing the girl's question.

"O Friend, if you have no faith in God and His miracles, how can you ever think of realising your dreams?" sweetly scolded Tasmina.

Young Sohail stood in silence and thought over her words. Tasmina had always been ■ source of solace to his restless heart in this arid land. Couldn't she be right, after all? Did the magic lamp really exist and could it be obtained by God's grace?

The night deepened and the wee little hamlet soon fell fast asleep, except for one of its young inhabitants. For, the poor farmer kneeling

in the middle of his plot of land prayed, his eyes closed and his hands raised towards the sky. He prayed all night long and earnest were his prayers.

*"Grant me O Lord, the magical lamp,
It'll enliven my spirit so damp.
I've dreams of happiness, dreams so nice,
Only the lamp of Aladdin can fulfil in a
trice."*

Till the early hours of dawn he thus prayed without a wink of sleep. Then, as he opened his eyes, lo and behold, he saw a little lamp of gold come floating in along with the first streak of sunlight streaming through the open doorway. It landed right on the young man's stretched out palms, and he ran his fingers over it to make sure that it was real.

No sooner had he done this, out of a wisp of blue smoke that rose from

the nozzle of the lamp, there emerged a giant genie with a long, long moustache and donned in an apparel of the seven colours of the rainbow. He stood towering over the youth and bowed to him.

"Greetings, Master, from the genie of the great lamp! What is thy command?" he asked in a thundering voice that seemed to shake the earth.

*"A great and just king I would like to be,
Of the most splendid and peaceful of
realms.
With choicest food and sparkling gems
around me,
According to the sweetest of my sweet
dreams,"*

replied Sohail in a happy musical strain.

In the twinkle of an eye, the young man found himself sitting on a golden





throne at the head of a table laden with the most delicious of dishes. Around him were arrayed shining and sparkling treasures. Through the window, one could see a charming valley – Sohail's new kingdom – with a happy people busy with their chores.

So it was, young Sohail had realised his wildest dreams. He revelled in his new world and his courtiers and people respected him and seemed to love him, too. There was never any want in his kingdom, for all he had to do was to rub the magic lamp and the genie would carry out his bidding in no time. There reigned peace and happiness in the realm. The king himself was as happy as a

lark.

Alas, not for long.

As time passed, King Sohail found, much to his wonder, that with all his power and wealth, he was not as content as he ought to have been. The luxuries and pleasures surrounding him no longer appealed to him as before. Worse, he soon found out that he had no true friends. In fact, none was faithful to him; all his so-called favourite courtiers and confidants flattered him only to win favours and costly gifts. They had no love for him in their hearts, nor were they desirous of his true affection. But he had some doubts whether they were really insincere or he was just imagining that they were so.

One day, he decided to know the truth. So, rubbing the little magic lamp, he summoned the genie, who at once appeared out of the wisp of blue smoke.

"Master, command me," he said with his customary courtesy.

"Invisible let me be,

Indeed I want to see

Whether my men are friends or foe,

For friends they seemed once, all I know,"

Sohail ordered in his sing-song manner.

And when he found that no one in his palace noticed him, he knew that the genie had not failed him. He had indeed become invisible.

He visited the homes and favourite haunts of his friends and ministers to

learn from their conversations their true feelings towards him. Alas, what he discovered deeply pained him, for all of them, without exception, ridiculed and mocked at him.

"Oh! How easy it is to fool our king!" said one of his close confidants.

"Ha, ha! Some sweet words and one can win over his wealth," put in his treasurer.

"Let's, one day, lead this nincompoop into the forest and leave him with the wild animals. Ho, ho, ho!" laughed the general of his army.

That was the last straw.

"What?" shouted the king angrily, oblivious that though he was invisible, his voice was audible.

All shuddered with fear, for all were familiar with His Majesty's voice. They looked around and found

no one present.

But the king did not say more. Leaving his men bewildered, he walked back to his palace.

'Alas, how mistaken I was when I thought with power and wealth happiness will be mine!' he said to himself.

He remembered the fresh air of his desert home, the straightforward and simple ways of the people, and dear Tasmina, who had unselfishly showered on him her tender affection. He longed to be there again, away from this world of deceit and hypocrisy.

So once again he brushed his fingers over the little magic lamp.

"At your service, Master," said the genie with his ceremonial bow.

"Will you be able to find me happiness and peace?" asked King Sohail.



"I'm sorry, Your Majesty, I've the power to get you everything under the sun and carry out all your bidding to the letter. But, alas, I know not wherefrom to get happiness and peace," said the genie apologetically.

"In that case, forthwith, I wish to be back in my village and my people. Then, I no longer require your service, good genie of the lamp," was the king's last order to him.

The next moment, Sohail found himself standing in his desert home. And the magic lamp had disappeared from his hand. He found everything was the same there, the sand, the people, and yet never had they seemed to him so beautiful as now.

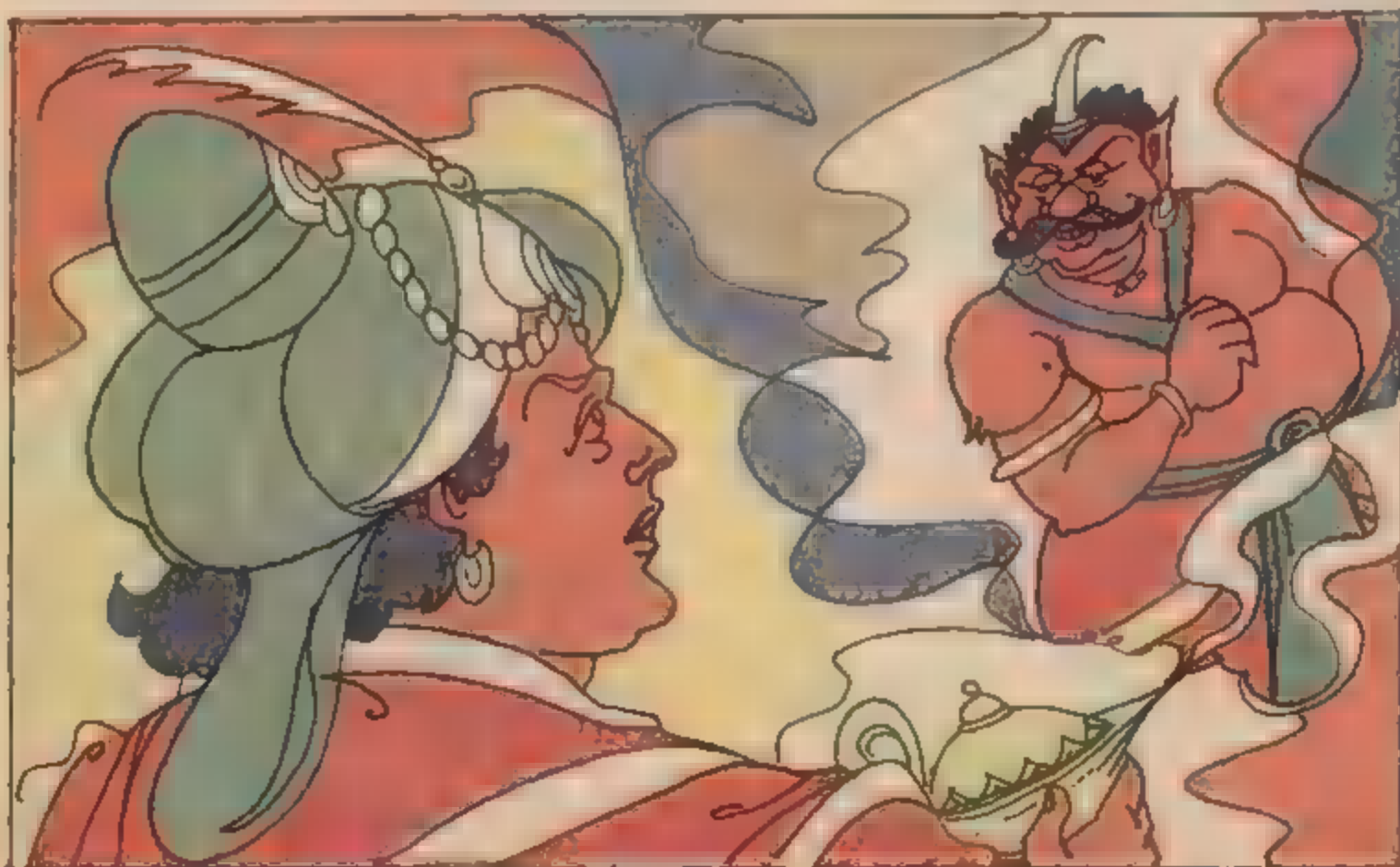
He was filled with gratitude for sweet Tasmina, the shoemaker's daughter, whose abiding faith had done wonders to his life. He suddenly

remembered the words of the sage on happiness that she had once quoted to him. Tears of joy flowed from his eyes. Not only had he enjoyed power and wealth but also had come to realise the truth that all the riches of the world will not suffice to make man content unless he first finds contentment within himself.

So Sohail resumed his work on his farm.

When again he sat with Tasmina in the stillness of the twilight, gazing at the stars in the sky, his heart was no longer restless and discontent. Instead, it was calm and peaceful. For, now it sheltered the beauty of an unwavering faith – faith in the grace of God, faith in the great unknown possibilities that nestle within man.

– Retold by Anup Kishore Das



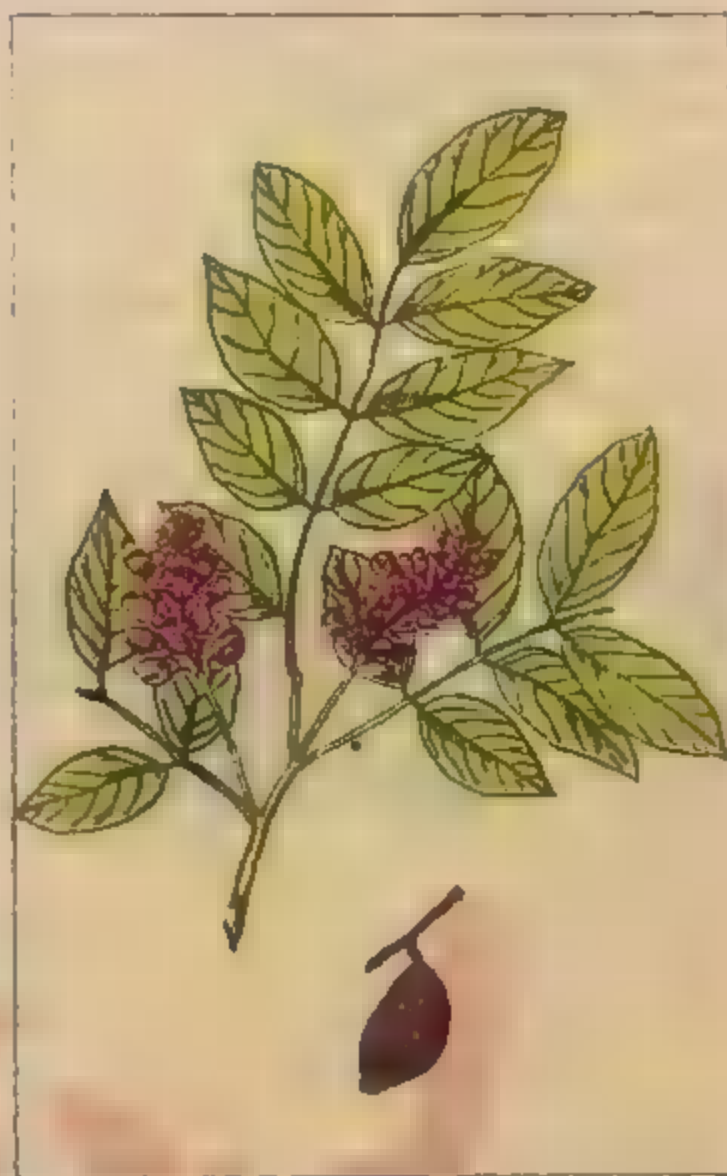
An island lends its name

There is an island near Bombay, called Karanjia. A tree found in abundance there acquired the name of the island, and came to be known as *Karanj* in Marathi, which is the regional language of that part of India. The name was borrowed by Hindi, Gujarati, and Bengali, too, though in the latter, the tree is also known as *Kanji*. In Tamil, the tree is called *Pangam* and *Punku*, and in Telugu and Malayalam *Pungu*. The botanical name *Pongamia pinnata* evidently has roots in the names popular in the south. In Malayalam, however, it has also a totally different name – *Unne*.

Commonly seen in the coastal areas, this moderately-sized tree grows in sandy beds of streams and rivers and along the sea coast. It is also common in the forests of Central India. It reaches an average height of 10 to 12 metres. It has a spreading crown, while the bark is covered with tubercles. It is an evergreen tree. The leaves, a pale green in colour, appear in lots of 5, 7 or 9 leaflets. They are broadly elliptic, with a pointed tip. The dry leaves are kept in wooden shelves to ward off white ants.

The flowers are a white, tinged with a streak of pink or violet, and are seen between April and June. It is a pretty sight in the morning to see the fallen flowers forming a carpet on the ground. The fruit is woody when dry. It tapers at both ends. There is just one pod.

The tree is generally planted on roadsides to provide shade.



AKRITAVRANA

Among all the disciples of the great sage Parasurama, the one who always remained with the *guru* and served him was Akritavrana.

One day, while passing through a forest, Parasurama heard a cry. It came from a cave. He went in and found a boy leaning against the wall, while a tiger was about to jump on him. He at once shot an arrow and the tiger fell dead.

The next moment a *gandharva*, demigod, emerged from the dead tiger. Bowing to Parasurama, the *gandharva* told him how a curse had turned him into a beast. While the *gandharva* was grateful to the great sage for liberating him into his original being, the boy was grateful for escaping death. "I stand *akritavrana* because of your kindness," he told the sage. *Akritavrana* means without a wound. From then on the boy was known as Akritavrana.

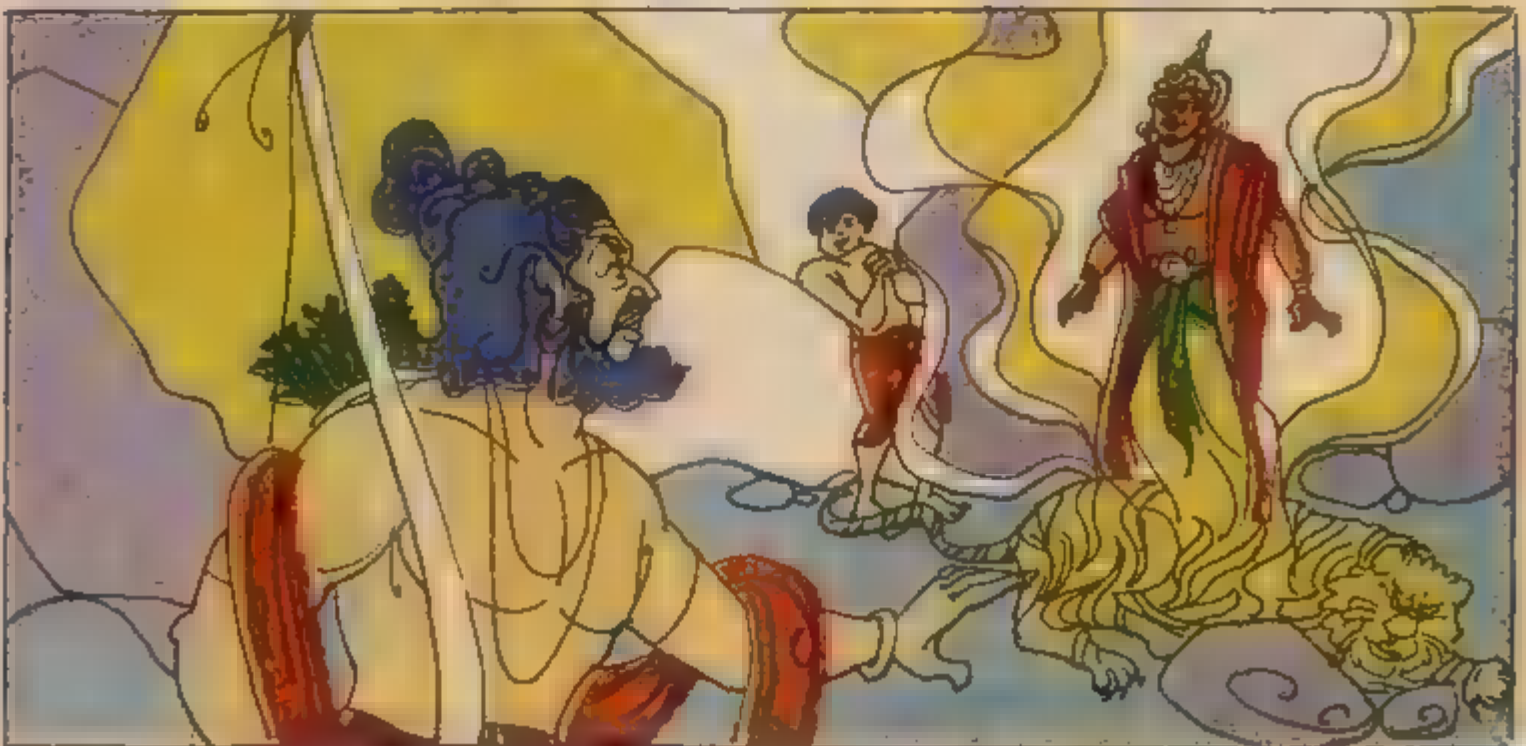
He followed Parasurama wherever he went, and the sage taught him not only scriptures but also different difficult skills.

Bhishma, the mighty hero and guardian of the Kauravas, once forcibly brought the two daughters of the King of Kashi, Amba and Ambalika, to be married to his younger brother Vichitravirya. Amba later revealed that she loved King Salva, and so Bhishma sent her to Salva, but Salva refused to accept her. Amba was then willing to marry Vichitravirya, but the latter was not willing. The princess then demanded that Bhishma married her, for it was he who was responsible for her humiliation. Bhishma, of course, could not oblige her as he was under a vow of celibacy.

Determined to take revenge on Bhishma, Princess Amba approached several heroes to help her. But none would dare confront Bhishma. Amba, at last, appealed to Parasurama. The compassionate sage first tried to persuade Bhishma to marry her and, failing, challenged him to a fight.

The fight took place at Kurukshetra, with Akritavrana as Bhishma's expert charioteer. It continued for long, no side showing signs of defeat. The gods and the sage, Narada, intervened and pacified the warring parties and the fight ended with neither victory nor defeat for any.

Akritavrana, with the blessings of his guru, became a renowned sage.



DO YOU KNOW?

1. How deep is the Dead Sea?
2. The Olympic flag has five rings on it in different colours. What are the colours? On what basis were they selected?
3. An Indian invented ■ instrument to measure the growth of plants. Name the Indian.
4. A Nobel Prize winner of 1906 had the distinction of eight of his students becoming Nobel laureates in subsequent years. Who was he?
5. A king was blind at birth. His queen blindfolded herself because her husband was blind. Who were they?
6. Who came to be called "Deshbandhu"? And who was called "Deenabandhu"?
7. Romans considered the owl as symbolic of disaster. What did the bees stand for them?
8. Madam Bhikaiji Cama is credited with designing India's tricolour. A woman designed the American flag. Name her.
9. When was the tiger chosen as the National Animal of India?
10. When was the "flying saucer" reported for the first time?
11. Italy's first woman doctor achieved fame in a totally different field. Who was she?
12. Jawaharlal wrote "*Discovery of India*" when he was imprisoned in a jail. Which jail was it?
13. When did MaoTse-tung proclaim the People's Republic of China?
14. Where will you go to see the "Temple of Heaven"?
15. Who was Akbar's revenue minister?

ANSWERS

1. 395.9 metres, making it the lowest point on the earth.
2. Blue, yellow, green, red, and black. At least one of these appears on the flag of any country in the world.
3. Jagdish Chandra Bose.
4. J.J. Thompson.
5. Dhritrashtra and Gandhari, in the *Mahabharata*.
6. C.R. Das and C.F. Andrews.
7. Good fortune. Bees were considered messengers of the gods.
8. Betsy Ross of Philadelphia. She used to stitch women's dresses.
9. In November 1972.
10. On June 24, 1947, when ■ pilot reported having seen a saucer skimming over water.
11. Maria Montesson, the famous education-ist, after whom is called a certain education system.
12. Ahmednagar Fort.
13. On September 21, 1949. The Soviet Union was the first country to recognise it, on October 2.
14. Beijing, China.
15. Todarmall.

Each one to himself

Summer was at its hottest in Rangarajapuram. The heat wave outside drove everybody to take refuge inside. ■ was then that a fire broke out in ■ cluster of huts. People ran helter-skelter, while some of them tried to put out the fire. One of the hut-dwellers, Ranga, was lazily sitting beneath the shade of a tree, unconcerned about all that was happening around him. He was even whistling ■ popular tune.

His friend Mayan came that way, hurrying towards the site of the fire. "Ranga! You're here! Can't you ■ the fire raging over there? Why can't you go and lend ■ helping hand, instead of sitting here and whistling?"

"None of them comes to my help," he said, "so why should I go to their help?"

"You may be right," remarked Mayan, "but the fire is raging next to your hut, which may catch fire any moment. They're trying to put out the fire so that your hut will be saved. Isn't that ■ help to you?"

"That's not correct," said Ranga with certainty. "They're extinguishing the fire so that it won't destroy their houses. They're concerned only about their own houses!"



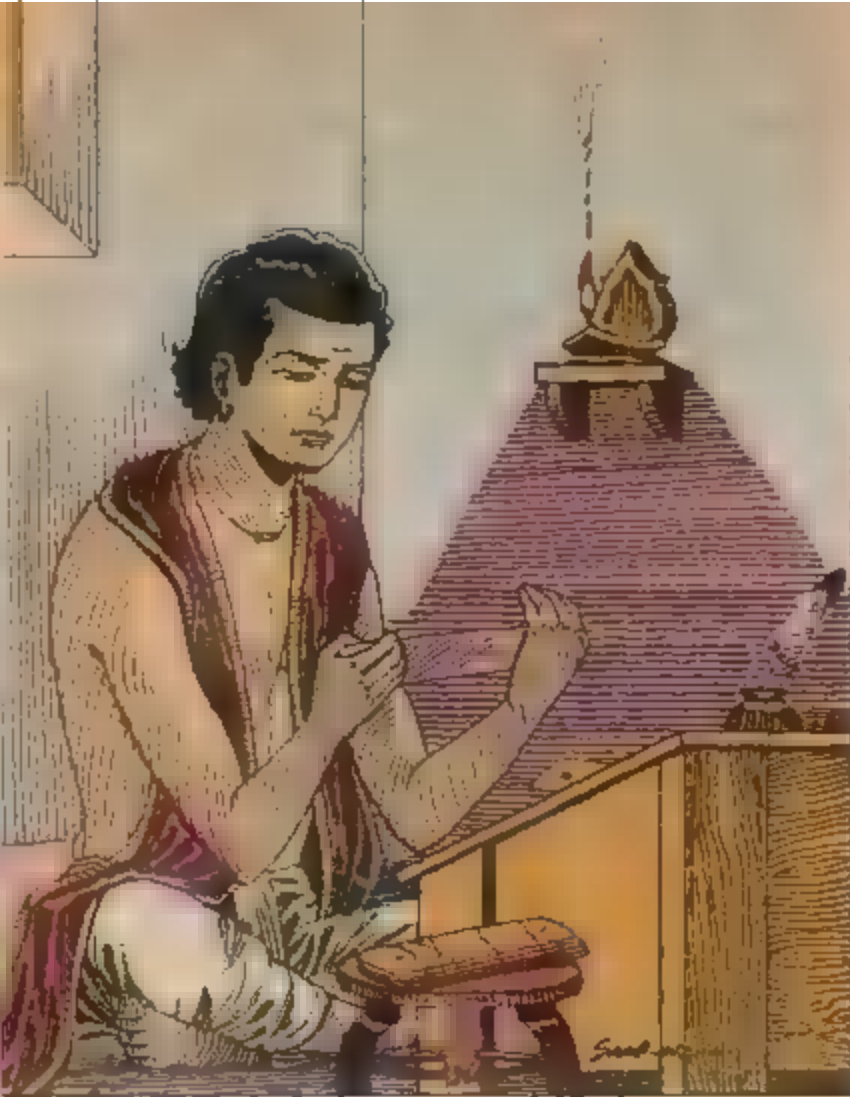


New Tales ■ King Vikram and the Vampire

Common

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! You seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite, as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. Tell me, are you trying to help some intellectual, a wise man, or a *pundit*? If so, I can tell you even now, intellect is not an end in itself. Anyone who possesses it must have some practical experience, too. Only then can he succeed in his mission. Take the case of Gnanasekhar. He proudly went about claiming that he was an intellectual. And it was left to his uncle's daughter to teach him some commonsense. You may listen to his



story." And the vampire then began his narration.

Gnanasekhar used to read a lot. There was practically no treatise that he had not read. He spent all his time reading and reading whatever that came his way. He posed as if he was a great learned person, and was ready to discuss any matter – serious or light – with anyone.

One day, his uncle Manmathnath came to meet him. He wished that the youngster married his daughter Manjula. Gnanasekhar did not give him a chance to reveal his proposal of marriage. Without wasting any time, he began talking to him about religion, philosophy, and logic.

His uncle listened to him for some-

time and then said: "Look here, young man, I too have some knowledge of all these. But I haven't come here today to discuss such subjects. You come to my place; there is a pundit called Paramaguru. He has deep knowledge of anything and everything. In fact, it is very difficult to understand the meaning of even some of his words."

"Is it so?" said Gnanasekhar. "Uncle, I shall go with you. I don't think your pundit knows as much as I know. Anyway I would like to meet him and if possible put some questions to him."

"That's a good idea," said Manmathnath. "Do come along; I shall introduce you to Paramaguru. But mind you. He's not a hollow pundit like anyone whom you might have met by now. His knowledge is deep and wide. Remember that when you speak to him."

The young man started along with his uncle. On the way, Gnanasekhar remarked, "Uncle, I doubt whether Paramaguru will even be willing to face me!"

To which his uncle responded, "Why should you presuppose things? You would better meet him personally and then only come to a conclusion." He really wanted to say, 'Gnanasekhar, I'm only going to introduce my daughter to you. What I wish is, both of you should get married. I'm not bothered with anything

else.' However, he kept quiet.

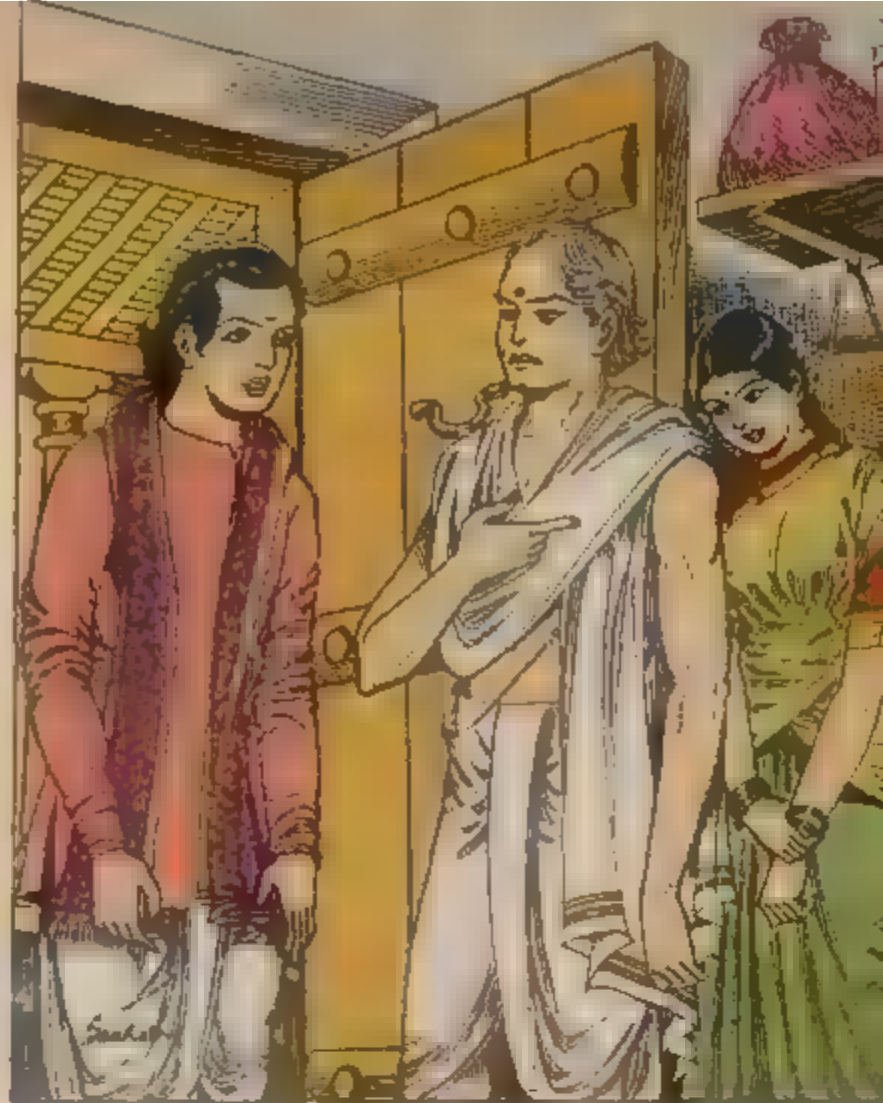
Manmathnath took him straight to his house, and made him comfortable there. "You always think of only religion and philosophy and things like that. You don't seem to be bothered about your own life and your personal necessities. You're not saying anything about that. That's not correct. Anyway, as long as you stay here, you'll be looked after by my daughter. She'll attend to all your requirements."

"I haven't thought of my life and my own needs. Never," said Gnanasekhar. "They're not of any importance to me. You take me to your Paramaguru. I must have a long talk with him. That's my only wish."

"Brother, it'll be a great honour if he were to agree to meet you and talk to you," said Manjula, who was overhearing their conversation. "You must be careful when you argue with him. We cannot understand some of the words and expressions he uses. Then, how can you enter into an argument with him?"

"Why should you worry?" snapped Gnanasekhar. "That'll be my look out. You've no knowledge of these things. So, why should you bother at all?"

"Now stop that argument between you, too," said Manmathnath. "Don't worry Gnanasekhar. I'm now leaving for Paramaguru's place. I shall find out whether he is available, if so when

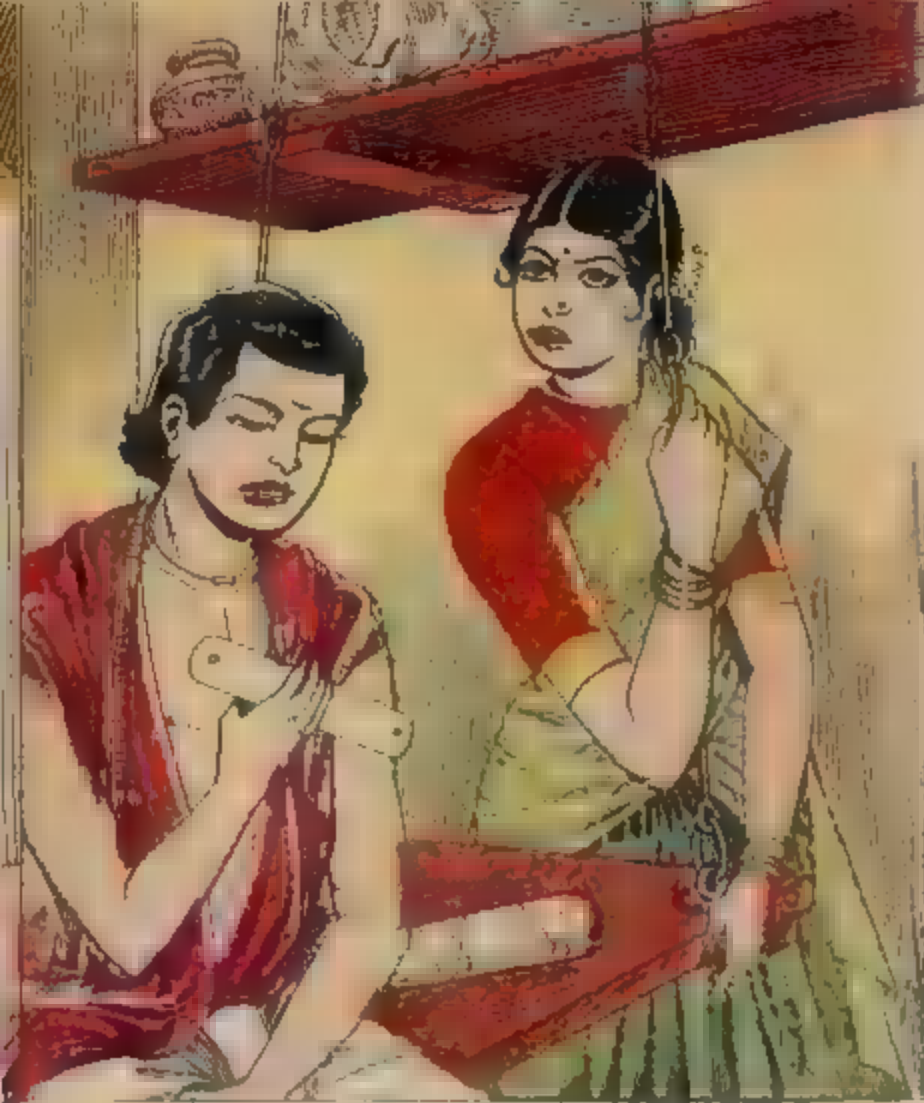


he can meet you, and all that. Meanwhile, you go and take a bath, and eat some food. Manjula will attend on you." He then left in search of Paramaguru.

Now Manjula was a charming girl, well-behaved, well-educated, and knowledgeable. She was also a good conversationalist. Besides, she was very active in carrying out the daily chores. But Gnanasekhar was not at all drawn to her. He did have a bath and ate his food, though all the while he was wondering when he would be able to meet Paramaguru.

Manmathnath came back after some time. "Sekhar, Paramaguru is away."

"When would he come back?" que-



ried Gnanasekhar, eagerly.

"He may take two or three days," replied his uncle. "His return may even be delayed. Can't say."

"Two or three days?" said Gnanasekhar impatiently. "What'll I do till then?"

"That shouldn't matter much, brother," remarked Manjula. "I shall keep you engaged. I'm also educated. We shall hold discussions and carry on arguments. In fact, I can thereby acquire more knowledge."

"Look at that!" exclaimed Gnanasekhar. "Where's my knowledge! Can you compare your knowledge with my intellect? I tell you, Manjula, don't try to exhibit your ignorance. You keep yourself to your

chores."

Manjula felt greatly hurt. "Can you tell me the meaning of some of the words Paramaguru had used? He probably had people like you in mind when he said 'ungrateful'." And then she walked out of the room.

Gnanasekhar now began to think. 'Paramaguru has never met me. Why should he say ungrateful about me? What does he mean?' He could not find an answer, or an explanation. He called Manjula. "Tell me, what's the meaning of that word Paramaguru is said to have used?"

"So, you don't know its meaning?" Manjula gave out a loud laughter. "Brother, there's no fun in posing as a great intellectual. You must have a lot of practical experience and some commonsense and worldly knowledge. Then, and only then can gnanasekhar become a real Gnanasekhar (repository of knowledge). If you want to know the meaning of that word, you must know something about Madaswami. Paramaguru used that expression in reference to this swami who had only half-baked knowledge."

Gnanasekhar wondered: Does someone dare to point out *his* ignorance? And a girl at that! However, he sought a clarification. "Manjula, I don't understand you. Please make yourself clear."

The girl laughed again. "So you plead ignorance, don't you? Well, let

me explain." And then she explained the root word and all the different derivatives and their meanings and usages. She also told him about Madaswami, who was a poor farmer. An offer went to him to buy a piece of land at a cheap price. Even then he did not have enough money. He borrowed some money from his neighbour Anandswami and then bought the land. As he tilled the soil to convert it into a farm, he came upon a treasure-chest and he was thus able to return the loan to his friend.

Meanwhile, Anandswami fixed his daughter's wedding. Unfortunately, he did not have sufficient money for the festivities. He thought he could take a loan from Madaswami. He went in search of his friend.

"Ananda, you should never conduct a marriage with borrowed money. That's suicidal. Because you would never be able to return the money. You should, instead, perform the ceremony with whatever you can spare."

Anandswami went back disappointed. One day, Madaswami was working in his field when a snake bit him. He swooned in the field. Anandswami saw this and rushed to his help. He carried him on his shoulder and took him to a *vaidya* who cured him of the snake-bite. Madaswami was thus saved.

On another day, Anandswami had a similar experience, but Madaswami



did not go to this help. In fact, some passers-by saw Anandswami struggling on the road and they took him to a doctor. He was saved.

"Paramaguru, in his discourse, had narrated this incident," said Manjula, "and called him ungrateful. Maybe you should meet Madaswami. Only then will you be able to understand the meaning of the word better."

Gnanasekhar could not believe all this. "Could there be such a person, Manjula? It is unbelievable."

"Yes, brother," confirmed Manjula. "There's really someone like that. You should go and meet him."

Gnanasekhar set out in search of Madaswami. On the way, he came upon two persons quarrelling. They



had even come to blows. One of them was a hefty fellow, whereas the other was lean and lanky. The first one was beating the other black and blue and nobody came forward to intervene between them. Gnanasekhar took courage and separated them with some force.

The hefty fellow protested. "This fellow was about to drown in the river, where I was taking my bath, and I took pity on him and rescued him. That was two days ago. Today, when I met him, I enquired after him. And you know what he did? He turned his face on me and just walked away. How else can you react? You tell me."

"He looks like an absent-minded fellow," remarked Gnanasekhar.

"That's why he walked away without remembering what you had done for him. Why should you show your anger to such a person? Look at him! Can he retaliate? You should fight with someone your equal!"

The hefty fellow let go the other man and went away. "By any chance, are you Madaswami?" asked Gnanasekhar.

The man looked baffled. "So you already know my name! Now you don't have to know more about me," he said haughtily and turned round and went away.

Gnanasekhar was bewildered. He heaved a heavy sigh and retraced his steps. "Did you met Madaswami, brother?" asked Manjula.

"Oh, yes!" replied Gnanasekhar. "Not only did I see him but I could also talk to him. The expression Paramaguru used about him is befitting his behaviour. That's all right, Manjula, but you told me that he had used that word to refer to *people like me*. Why me? Am I ungrateful?"

Manmathnath joined them at that moment. "Just think, Sekhar. How much did this girl serve you, in looking after your comforts? But you forgot to all remember that. So, what's the difference between you and Madaswami? Do you realise that people should have some commonsense and worldly knowledge? Remember all that Manjula has done for you and feel grateful to



her. Why don't you marry her? I must confess there's no one here called Paramaguru. But Madaswami is real. And there are many like him."

Gnanasekhar now looked at Manjula with gratitude.

The vampire concluded his narration thus and turned to King Vikramaditya. "O King! Gnanasekhar went about posing as a great intellectual. Still he could not understand the meaning of a simple word. Didn't the word ungrateful give him a shock when it was used by Manjula? If you know the answer and yet refuse to satisfy me, beware, your head will be blown to pieces!"

Vikramaditya had a ready answer. "Education and constant reading alone

will not make anyone an intellectual. Manjula wanted to prove this to Gnanasekhar. The word 'ungrateful' unfolded itself to bring a better knowledge to the young man. Not only that. He learnt the significance of the word when he came face to face with Madaswami. That brought him practical experience and wisdom. He also wished to be grateful to his uncle, and his daughter who was responsible for imparting to him more knowledge. He showed his gratitude by marrying her."

The vampire realised that he had been outwitted once again. He flew back to the ancient tree carrying the corpse with him. The king drew his sword and went after the vampire.

■ Make the best of ■ bad bargain

■ Only sickly sheep can infect the flock

■ He that talks much lies much



Olympic Games: The March to Atlanta

Four-year period

The 19th of July will not be far away as you hold this copy in your hands: you will be counting down for this once-in-four years extravaganza of excitement, entertainment, and thrill. Did you know that the four-year-period had been the convention since the days of the Olympiad of 776 B.C.? From that Games onward, ■ record has been maintained of the names of the winners. The first name in the record is that of Coroebus from Eleia, who won the "race of the stadium" – running from one end of the stadium to the other. The distance was approximately 183 metres. The race was known as the "Dromos".

Marathon

The first ever "Marathon" was not a race at all! A Greek soldier called Phillipides ran from the battlefield at Marathon to Athens (40 km) non-stop to announce the victory of Miltiade over the Persians in 490 B.C. On reaching Athens, he just had time to cry out, "Rejoice! We've won!" before he collapsed and died. It was to recall the feat of the Greek soldier that ■ event called Marathon was introduced in the first of the modern Olympic Games at Athens in 1896. The race was run on April 10. It was a terribly hot day. There were 17 runners. The

prudent among them pulled themselves out of the race. Spyridon Louis went on to win the race in 2 hours 58 minutes 50 seconds. He was a Greek postman. You will find his name in the record book, next to that of Phillipides.

First woman medallist

It was in the second of the modern Games in 1900 at Paris that women were admitted for the first time. In all 11 women – including four from France – took part in two of the 17 events – golf and tennis. Charlotte "Chattie" Cooper, the tennis player from Great Britain, was the first ever woman gold medallist. The Olympic motto – *Citius, Altius, Fortius* (swifter, higher, stronger) – was first used at the Paris Games which was held as part of the Paris Universal Exhibition. It was then called "International sports and physical exercise competitions" and *not* Olympic Games! People, including the participants, took everything lightly. Angling, bowling, leap frog, and three-legged races were among the events!

India's record

India won its first hockey gold in the 1928 Games at Amsterdam and retained ■ in five more consecutive Games. In 1928, India scored 29 goals without conceding a single goal. At the 1936 Berlin Games, India played five matches and scored 39 goals and conceded only one, to the German team. Remember, the country Pakistan had not come into being till then. In 1960 at Rome, Pakistan defeated India in the final 1-0. In the next Games (1964) at Tokyo, India defeated Pakistan 1-0. In 1968 (Mexico City) and 1972 (Munich), India won only the bronze medal. Hockey was introduced at the

London Games in 1908, and the winners were Great Britain. In 1912 the event was dropped. Great Britain won again in 1920 at Antwerp. In 1924, it was not contested at the Paris Games.

Atlanta Mascot

When the mascot of the Centennial Games (1996) was unveiled at the 1992 Games at Barcelona, the name given to it was WHATIZIT. It is a computer-generated creature which, critics said, is neither an animal nor has it any human resemblance. The mouthful of a name

has now been shortened to IZZY. The first ever mascot was the red jaguar of the 1968 Games in Mexico City. It was not given any name. However, the mascots of subsequent Games were called Waldi (dachshund), Amik (beaver), Misha (bear), Sam (eagle), Hodori (tiger), and Cobi (dog). The main role of the mascot is to popularise the Games by appearing on T-shirts, mugs, caps, toys, and a host of other merchandize. IZZI is expected to bring in a revenue of 30 million dollars.

SPORTS SNIPPETS

Revived

After nearly 2,300 years, the games at ancient Nemea were revived this year. In olden times, four cities of Greece held festivals. If it was at Delphi one year, the next year, it would be in Isthmia, and the next in Nemea, and the next in Olympia, which of course became better known than the others. In 1995, the citizens of Nemea decided to revive the games in a manner quite different from the modern Olympics. Only foot races were held. The participants above 12 years of age numbered 500 from 28 countries. Running barefoot, Payton Jordan (79) of the U.S.A. won the first official sprint. He spoke of the thrill he got when his feet 'trod the very soil that the ancient champions trod'. Among the women competitors 81-year-old Doreen Spitzer was the oldest.

Rare double

When Yevgeny Kafelnikov (22 years) beat Germany's Michael Stich in the French Open tennis tournament on June 9, he was the first Russian to win the Grand Slam singles crown. He achieved a rare double when he paired with Daniel Vacek a day earlier to win the doubles title. The last player to achieve this feat was Ken Rosewall of Australia in 1968. Just five years ago Kafelnikov was 450th in ATP ranking. In this year's French Open he was seeded sixth. A case of 'nobody' metamorphosing into 'somebody'!





FAITH HELPS

Subhas was in search of work. He went to Madangiri where nothing came his way. So, he decided to call on the village chief, who took pity on him. "Luckily you're alone, Subhas. You do one thing. Kalipada's house is lying vacant. You may occupy a portion, and I'm sure your neighbours there will find some work for you. You'll be able to manage."

He then went to call on Kalipada. "I've been sent by the village chief. He suggested I could stay in a portion of your vacant house and seek work from the neighbours. Whenever I've some money to spare, I shall pay you rent. He waited for a response from Kalipada who was listening intently to what Subhas was saying. "If you've any work, sir, please allow me to do it," he added.

"It's true, one of my houses is right

now vacant," said Kalipada. "You may stay there, provided you keep the place neat and tidy. And you must light the lamp every day. Fortunately, I've no dearth of servants, and they look after my needs. So, right now I can't offer you any work, but I shall keep you in mind."

Subhas was very happy. At least he had found a roof to stay beneath. He kept the place spick and span. At the same time, he knocked at many doors seeking work. He did not succeed for some days. One day, the door he knocked at happened to be that of poet Kuber. "At present I don't need any help," he told Subhas. "In fact, I myself attend to all chores. After all, I'm a poet, and I won't need any servants' help in my work. Better try elsewhere."

Subhas persisted. "Sir, you've a

huge compound and a big backyard. I can raise a vegetable garden there." His hands were itching to do some work, as it were.

Kuber took a good look at the young man. He appeared to be well-behaved and hard-working. "I myself do all such work, Subhas. I need some exercise every now and then. If I don't give some exercise to my body, what'll happen to me! Don't worry about your food, if you've any anxiety on that count. God has provided me enough and I can, without any difficulty, give you a meal every day. You can come and partake of what ever is available here every day."

"I'm grateful to you, sir, for your generosity," said Subhas very politely. "But I don't wish to enjoy food at a place where I can't do any work in return. If you don't mind, I may borrow some money from you whenever I have a need for it. And when I earn enough, I shall repay you." He did not ask for a loan that day. He took leave of Kuber and went his way.

He knocked at several more doors, but could not find work anywhere. He was now dead tired. He sought the shade of a tree and was leaning against it when the village chief came that way. "Did you manage to get any work, Subhas?" he queried.

"What shall I say, sir?" said Subhas pitifully. "I'm afraid I can't get any work in this place. It looks as though everybody attends to his own needs



and has thus prospered. Everyone asks me to eat a meal at his place, without giving me an opportunity to work in return. But I don't like to enjoy such free food."

The chief smiled. "That's a good attitude, Subhas. But I would advise you to accept the offer and eat at a different place every day. You would have no botheration."

Subhas was not ready to agree with the village chief. "No, sir. I don't like to eat any food without doing any work. I've never taken any such undue advantage. I don't mind going hungry; still, I wouldn't want to enjoy any free food."

The village chief really admired Subhas's stand. See that! Here was



someone who was refusing offers of food even without work. Couldn't he go somewhere else in search of work? The chief was full of such thoughts as he proceeded on his way.

He did not leave the matter there. He held a meeting of all prominent persons of the locality and told them about Subhas. He was all praise for the young man. "He has come to this place for the first time. He is quite new here and seems to have tried everywhere for work, but without much success. And he's not willing to eat free food wherever it is offered. So, I suggest that we take turns in giving him work every day, thus helping him to earn his food. He would be agreeable to this arrangement."

Everyone present at the meeting gave their consent to what the village chief suggested. Accordingly, each one of them offered work to Subhas every day and he willingly ate the food given to him at the end of the day. Whenever he needed money, he was not shy of asking for small loans and everybody willingly gave him whatever he asked for, never bothering him about repayment.

A whole year passed. One day, Subhas called on the village chief. "I wish to go to my village for a few days. What shall I bring from there?"

The village chief gave a broad smile. "All right, but what do you think you can bring from your village?"

"We have a Durga temple in our village," said Subhas, and added with confidence, "Mother would give me whatever I ask her."

"Is that so?" said the village chief in wonderment. "Then I shall go with you. I don't have children; let me get the blessings of the Divine Mother."

"That'll not work, sir," said Subhas politely. "I should go to Her alone. And I shall ask for Her blessings."

"All right," said the village chief. "You may go and plead on my behalf. It's ten years since I married, but I haven't been able to hold a baby of my own."

"I shall pray for you, sir," said Subhas.

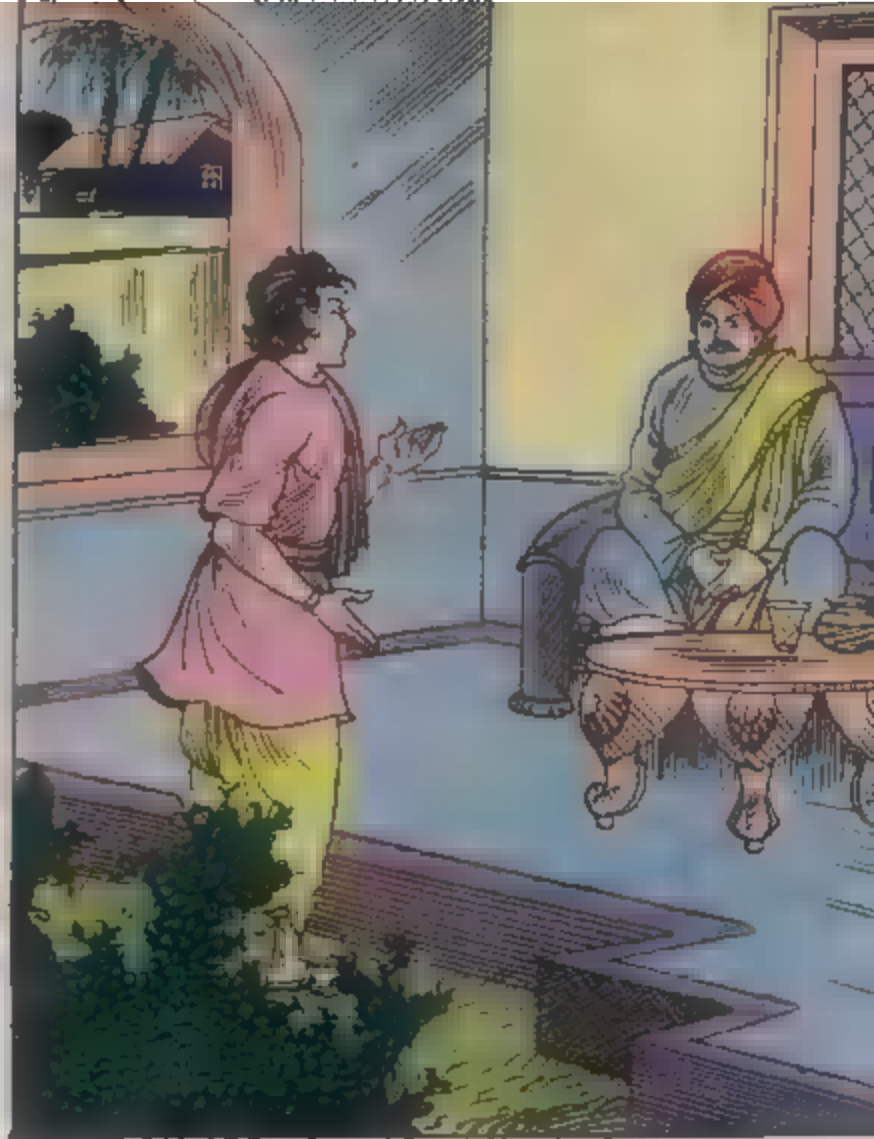
The news spread that Subhas was

going to his village and that he would please Mother Durga and bring Her blessings for all of them, especially the village chief. People flocked to meet him and entreat him with favours from the goddess. They all left with him their requirements and demands. Some even asked for money to construct a village road; some wanted a wall around the village temple.

As he met the village folk and was listening to them, someone with a cruel, fearsome face forced his way forward. "So, you're here and up to your old tricks?" he said in an angry tone, while twirling his moustache.

The village chief, who was in the crowd, heard the man's remark and was terribly upset. "Who are you? Where are you from? What business have you here? What nonsense are you talking?"

"I'm Rudra from Rayadurg," the stranger replied coolly. Pointing to Subhas, he said, "This man was in our place for a year. He borrowed money left and right and did not repay a single paisa. After one year, just as he was telling you people, he also told us that he would be able to invoke the blessings of goddess Durga in his village and get boons for everybody. Some people did not believe him. They asked him to return the loans and go away as fast as possible. One night, he left the place without telling anybody. In fact, they had asked me to search for him and take him back.



Now, I won't let him escape." The man took a step forward to catch hold of Subhas.

The village chief intervened. "Stop!" He then turned to Subhas. "What he said now – is it all true, Subhas?"

"Yes, sir, it's all true," replied Subhas unhesitatingly.

"Why did you do so?" asked the village chief, without any tinge of anger in his voice.

"I was in Mahendrapuri for a year," explained Subhas. "I had to borrow money from many people; at the same time, I earned enough money and saved a part of it. But someone stole all that money and I told everybody about the incident. I also told them



that I was going home to worship Mother Durga. They did not believe me and insisted that I returned their money and left the place. I feared for my life and escaped. Then I went to Rayadurg. Something similar happened. I did not repay my creditors, but returned to Mahendrapuri and repaid all the money that I had borrowed. In fact, I was able to give them double of what I had taken from them. After that I came here. I was planning to go to Rayadurg and repay the loans I had taken there. And then to go home to pray for all of you at the Durga temple, just as I had promised everybody."

"Rubbish! It's all a lie, sir!" shouted Rudra, and again moved forward to

catch hold of Subhas.

"Believe me, Rudra!" protested Subhas. "If you so wish, I shall accompany you to Rayadurg and return all the loans. Just wait and see!"

"Are you posing as if you're a Harischandra?" said Rudra with a sneer. "Then what'll happen to the monies you've borrowed *here*? You'll have to move on to yet another place and play the same tricks!"

The village chief once again intervened. "We're a prosperous lot, Rudra," he said. "None of us is anxious about the loans we have given him. In fact, we didn't even consider them as loans, so we never insisted on repayment. In fact, it is Subhas who insists that he would repay us some day. We believe in people in whom we've confidence. We also believe in divine blessings. Anyway, let him go to Rayadurg and repay all the loans. After that you set him free, so that he can pray to Mother Durga on our behalf."

Rudra was not quite convinced. "How're you sure that after he repays our loans, he wouldn't go somewhere and cheat the people there?"

The village chief laughed aloud. "We're quite different from the people of Rayadurg," he said. "We've full faith in him and we haven't asked him to settle the loans. He has worked hard in our houses and has not accepted any wages. We're certain that he won't go to another place to repeat



his action. We won't bother him on that count."

Rudra stood stupefied as he listened to the praise being showered on Subhas. They did not stop him, nor did they ask for their monies. They gave him an honourable send off. Subhas left with a lot of respect for the village chief and admiration for the people who reposed so much faith in him. He took leave of every one of them and accompanied Rudra.

On reaching Rayadurg, he paid back all the monies he had borrowed from the people there. He then went back to his own village, where he

worshipped at the Durga temple in the morning and evening.

Back in Madangiri, the people began experiencing the blessings of the Divine Mother. The village chief became the father of a handsome baby boy. Many people recovered from their illnesses. Donations poured in for laying roads and constructing a wall around the village temple. Wells which had saltish water, now had sweet water. Everybody remembered Subhas and his promises. They wished he would return to Madangiri one day. Alas! that remained a mere wishful thinking.

- ★ Waste not, want not
- ★ No man eats gold fish
- ★ Truth is great and will prevail
- ★ Act well your part, there all the honour lies
- ★ Friends are as dangerous ■ enemies
- ★ A sage is the instructor of hundred ages
- ★ The wolf changes his coat, but not his discipline

Golden Hour Teasers - No. 3 : Answers

1. Ahimsaka.

2.. Rabbits. The rabbits, alien to the continent of Australia, multiplied unchecked here, and are now a menace to farmers, eating away all the grass meant for cows and sheep.

3. Tipu Sultan.



4. Three. If the first is white and the second is black, the third will make a pair.

5. Soman should make the elephant stand in the boat and mark the level to which the boat has sunk. Then he should load the boat with sand till the boat sinks to that level. Afterwards he can weigh the sand on his weighing machine to get the weight of the elephant.

6. First divide the cannons into three groups of three, three and two. Now weigh the first two groups against each other on the scale. If they balance, you can find the odd

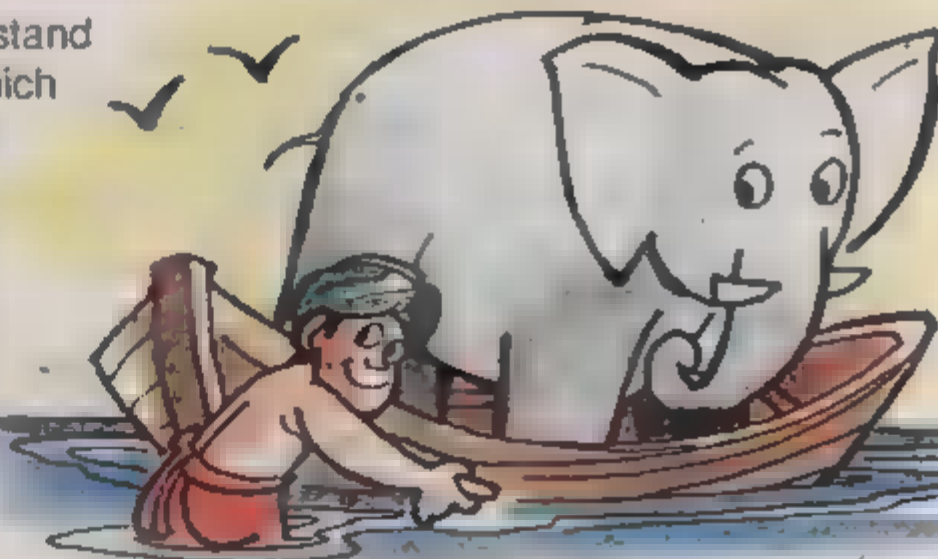
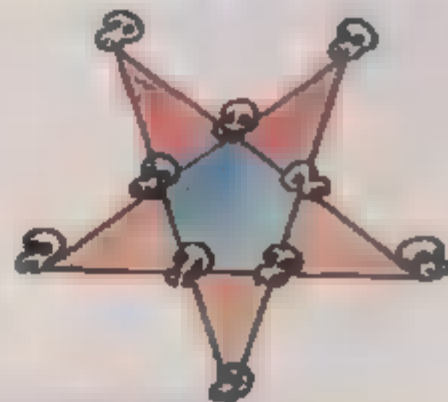


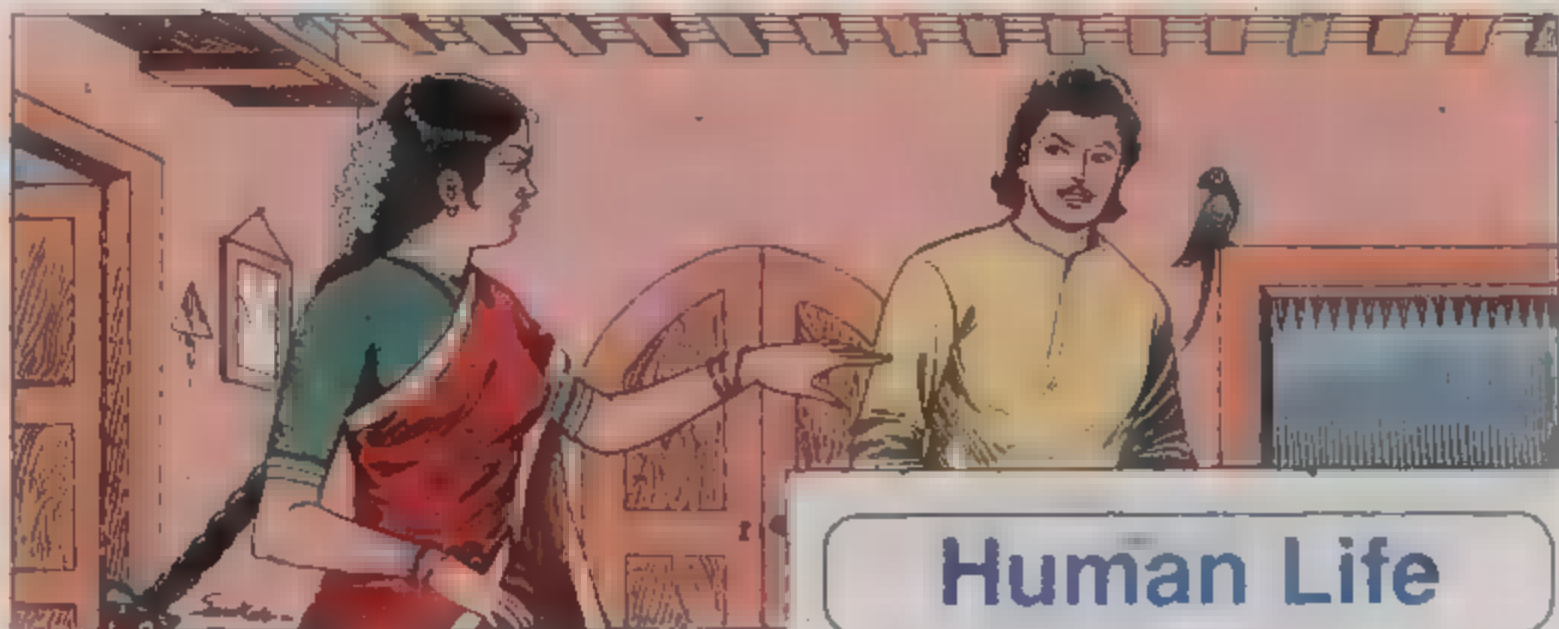
cannon by weighing the remaining two cannons against each other. If the first two groups do not balance, you can take any two cannons from the group that weighs less and balance them against each other to find the odd one.

7. It was their fare for the journey to the next world.



The ten skulls in five rows:





Human Life

Gopu and Gomti got married, and set up their own home. Gopu came off a middle class family, while Gomti's people were of affluent circumstances, and so she was used to a life of luxury.

At her new place, Gomti spent her time watching the rich ladies of the place, what kind of dresses they wore, how costly they were, and what type of jewellery they attired themselves with. They became the cynosure of her eyes, and she always desired to imitate them and follow their fashion. She began bothering her husband to buy similar dress and ornaments.

Gopu was only a zamindar's clerk. How then could he meet all of Gomti's demands and requirements and satisfy her and make her happy? Soon, he started hearing murmurings, and protestations, and complaints. He would recall all that his wife said and uttered while at work, and soon he was unable to concentrate in his work. To cut it short, the zamindar dismissed

him from service.

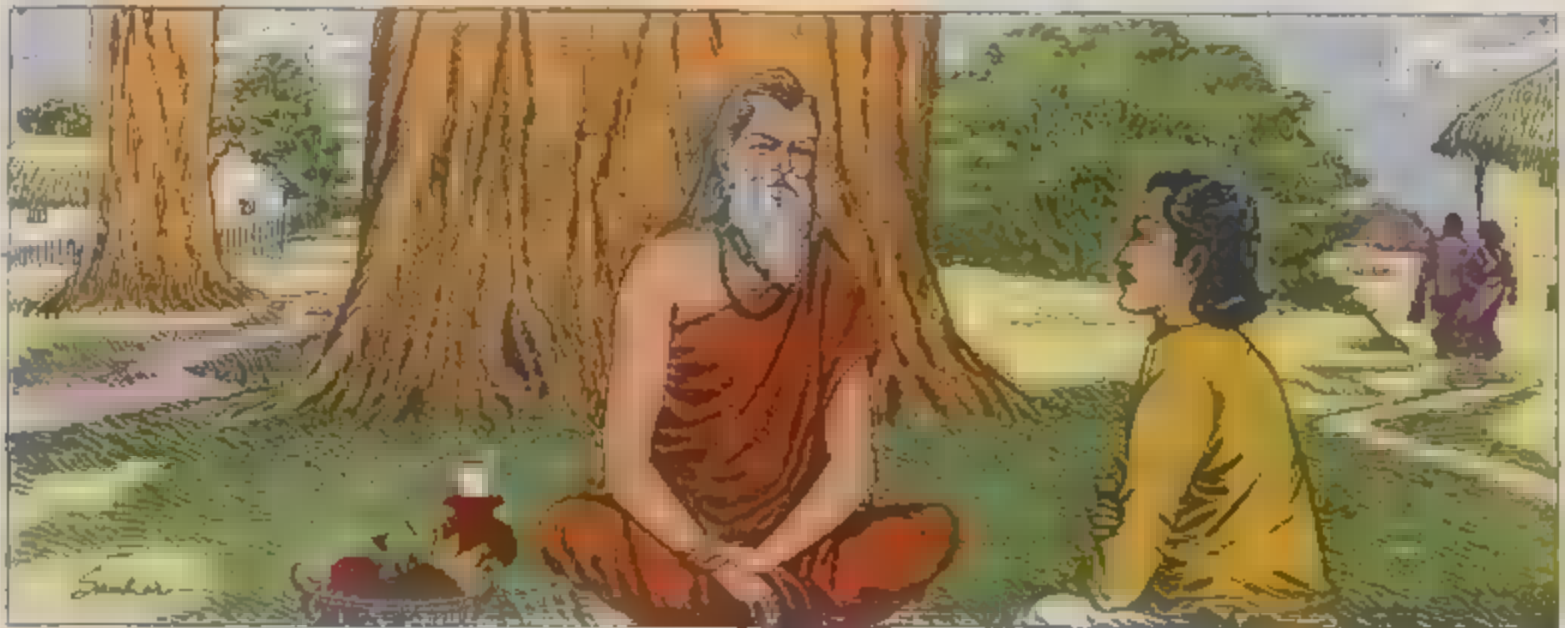
He was in a fix. He tried for a job and could not get one easily. He wandered hither and thither. One day, a yogi arrived in his place. Gopu called on Nityananda and poured out his grief. He had to complain about his wife and her crazy demands and how much loss and privation he had to suffer on account of her.

"What exactly do you want, Gopu?" asked the yogi.

"I'm tired of this life on earth, O revered swami!" wailed Gopu. "I wish I was dead and born as something else, but not a human being."

"What do you want to become, then?" queried the yogi. "Be specific. Then I'll be able to show to you the kind of life that one leads."

Gopu looked all around. He saw a jasmine creeper and the flowers blowing this way and that in the breeze. A lovely smell wafted from the flowers. How about a flower like the jasmine? He closed his eyes and



thought of only the jasmine flower. He saw the flower fading away and falling down after a short life. No, he would like to lead a longer life.

He looked around once again. He saw a lovely bird sitting on a tree and coo-ing. He wished to become a bird like the one on the tree. He closed his eyes again. Now what did he see? The bird was freely flying in the air. Suddenly, an arrow hit the bird and it fell down dead. When he opened his eyes, there were tears in them.

Next he saw a kid frolicking in the meadow a little away. He wished he could be like that little goat and lead a merry life. He closed his eyes once again. He was horrified when he saw someone grabbing the goat and running towards the meat shop, where he chopped off its

head. "No!" he shouted as he opened his eyes. "No, sire, I don't want to become a kid like that!"

He prostrated before the yogi. "Swami! Every life appears to have its own trials and tribulations. Human life has less worries. I think I would continue to be a human being. Maybe I'll have to tolerate my wife's harsh words. I shall willingly suffer them."

"You're right, Gopu," said Nityananda. "In human life, there is a lot of give and take. Your wife appears to be slightly greedy. Try and give her some advice. She may change her attitude, and your domestic life will be smooth."

The yogi blessed him before he sent him away. Gopu was now more confident of himself than earlier.

- Conciliatory manners command esteem
- Conduct and courage lead to honour
- A good mind possesses a kingdom



LET US KNOW

Who invented the Richter Scale? How does it measure an earthquake?

– **H.S.G. Babu, Secunderabad**

Charles Francis Richter (1900-1985), the U.S. seismologist, devised a scale for measuring the magnitude of the waves created by earthquakes. It is a Logarithmic scale, having steps graded from 1 to 10. The magnitude of an earthquake differs from its intensity, which is measured by the Mercalli Scale (called after Italian seismologist, Giuseppe Mercalli, 1850-1914).

What does the expression 'horse-trading' convey?

– **S.R. Gulukota, Manthani**

The expression comes from the auction of race horses held periodically. Like at any other auction, astronomical prices are paid for these horses. In political parlance, it refers to the incentives in cash or kind offered to people to leave their party and join or support another party aiming to gain power.

OUR READERS WRITE

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– **Dhruti Dhar Das, Jagatsinghpur.**

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– **Anita, Kharagpur.**

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– **Jatindra Singh, Bundargarh.**



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



S.G. SESHAGIRI



S.G. SESHAGIRI

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I'm planting a Tulsi tree.
Hope it grows into a
B-I-I-G one.



Lovable, blind Chacha
Kunwar. He's been my
parents' guide. The least
I can do is help him
cross safely.



Aha! This time Dad's
got the flu and Mum's
told me to give him a
dose of medicine.



Gangu Bai has coolly
taken the day off. Leaving
Radha Mausi and me in a
soapy mess.



Before that rich glutton
of a Raju snatches my
Kaju Barfi, let me give it
to poor Smita.



Naughty Timmy has got
himself hurt. Now this lil'
Doc will set him right.



I'm helping Uncle Rajeev
with the car repairs.
Though Mum said "I'll be
a spanner in the works".



With Chandra, my maths
teacher, numbers are fun.
Time I gave her a dozen
smiling roses.



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